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MONSTERS
#263

SEP/OCT 2012

FAMOUS **MONSTERS**[®] OF FILMLAND



UNIVERSAL PICTURES: A CENTURY OF SCREAMS
FEATURING 30 YEARS OF THE THING!

A MORELAND CLASSICS, LLC MAGAZINE

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PRESIDENT

September 8, 1931

Mr. Forrest J. Ackerman,
530 Staples Avenue,
San Francisco, California.

Dear Mr. Ackerman:

I am very glad, indeed, that you keep in such close touch with my company as to tell me you follow every move we make. It is gratifying to have such an enthusiastic and ardent admirer of our product. I hope that you will give me the benefit of your opinion when you have had an opportunity to see the pictures you read about in the pamphlet recently sent you. I have had your name put on our list so that you may receive a supplementary booklet which is on the press but will soon be ready.

Answering your question about buying stills, we would be very glad to supply them to you from the New York Office. FRANKENSTEIN, as you know, is now in production. However, no stills have as yet been sent to New York. I would suggest that you might do better to wait until you have had an opportunity to see the production before you write for the stills since this will give you a better opportunity to know exactly what you want.

Cordially yours,

Carl Laemmle
President

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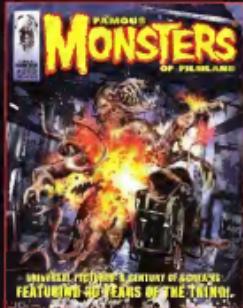
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FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND®

OPENING WOUNDS

I am what one would call a "betting man". That's not to be confused with a "gambling man", as the former plays it smart while the latter often lacks discipline and rationality. From the roulette wheels at the Wynn and the baccarat tables at MGM to the sports book at Caesar's, I've come out way more ahead than behind. I mention this because I want to establish my credentials in this department and offer you a wager. As one who uses odds and science as opposed to hunches and superstition, I think this may be the safest bet I've ever taken. I wager to you, dear reader, that had it not been for Carl Laemmle and his Universal Pictures, FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND would not exist.

Any takers?

Try to imagine FM#1 without any Universal films. What would have been on the cover? A woman standing there smiling at the upper right corner of the page—all by herself? Preposterous. The classic monsters from the House of Laemmle formed the backbone of FM in its infancy. Sure, classic horror existed at other studios during that time period, but none as iconic as Lugosi's DRACULA, Karloff's FRANKENSTEIN, Chaney Jr.'s WOLFMAN, and so many others.

Thus, it is out of a sense of responsibility, of duty, that we dedicate this entire issue to Universal's "Century of Screams", as we're calling it. We'll be taking a pictorial trip down memory lane with over 70 of the studio's greatest horror and Sci-Fi creations. We'll start in the silent era of Lon Chaney's genius and we won't stop until Rick Baker and Dave Elsey have re-invented Larry Talbot's fury half for a new generation. But wait, there's more! We have articles, too!

Covering 100 years of anything would be a massive undertaking, let alone the most storied motion picture company in the world. So we've chosen a variety of topics from some of our favorite Universal moments—some obvious, while others may seem more obscure. We'll look at one of horror's unsung heroes, Dwight Frye. We'll take you behind the scenes on Jim Henson's masterpiece, THE DARK CRYSTAL. We'll delve into the history of the studio a bit while looking at some of its greatest works and the geniuses behind them. And John Carpenter holds nothing back as he talks about the film that almost ended his career, a film that has become one of the most revered in monster culture: THE THING.

So it is with great excitement that I bid you a fond farewell as I see you off on your journey through time, a journey that is bound to stimulate the senses and kick the dust off of magical memories. There are no seat belts or passports required on this trip. Just turn the page and let imagination be your guide.

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Forrest J Ackerman

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Greetings Monster Kids! Welcome to another addition of Fangmail. We are always axe-cepting your letters, photos, and art!

Hi Guys,

This note is very long over due, almost forty years! Boy does time fly. I was very happy that FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND has come back from the grave. This time around it has improved greatly. It makes me very happy that it has come back. All my old friends are back—and some new ones, too. To see Carpenter, Spielberg, Landis, and Baker again is great. It is like a great big Halloween Party all over again. I am very happy. You are doing a great job!! Keep it up!!

In October, the week before Halloween, I went to the Chiller show, and Boy! One of the greatest things happened to me. After all of these years I finally met T.V. horror host Zacherley. I had not seen him since I was three years-old! He was and still IS the Cool Ghoul. Enclosed is a picture of me and "Zach". I am still happy to have seen him. I think that in one of your future issues of FAMOUS MONSTERS you should do an article about him again, because he is very old and fans new and old would like it. BUT PLEASE DO IT VERY SOON!! And also do an article on the Chiller show.

Keep up the great work!!!

Keep it fearful.

Kenneth D. McGrady
Monster Kid of the 1960s



Thank you for giving me great enjoyment with your latest issue. I used to be a big fan of the OUTER LIMITS, especially the way they would take over my TV and your feature on this great science fiction TV show made me smile. I also enjoyed your feature on DARK SHADOWS, I am sure glad that Tim Burton collaborated with Johnny Depp to make this fantastic 2012 DARK SHADOWS movie! I heard some people complain that they did not like the comedy in this movie, compared with the soap opera, that was drama oriented. I enjoyed the movie and I still enjoy seeing reruns of the original DARK SHADOWS. THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI was another one of my old time favorites, again thank you for the memories!

Paul Dale Roberts

Dear Famous Monsters of Filmland,

I am 55 years old and still living in the dark ages. I have NO internet connection at home and can not order your magazine from work. Yes, I have a few friends connected, but would rather be independent. To complicate matters, my younger brother is in prison and he would like me to order a subscription to FAMOUS MONSTERS, which I don't mind doing as he is my brother.

Is there any way you can send an order form or tell me how to order a subscription and have it shipped to the XXXXXX Prison? I could argue that he doesn't deserve it, however everybody deserves a good helping of horror and FAMOUS MONSTERS, don't you think?

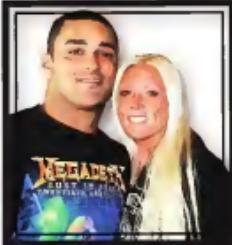
Thanks for any help,

[name withheld]

P.S.: He may be in for 4-7 years, so I could be a good customer. Boy, what people do for the love of family!

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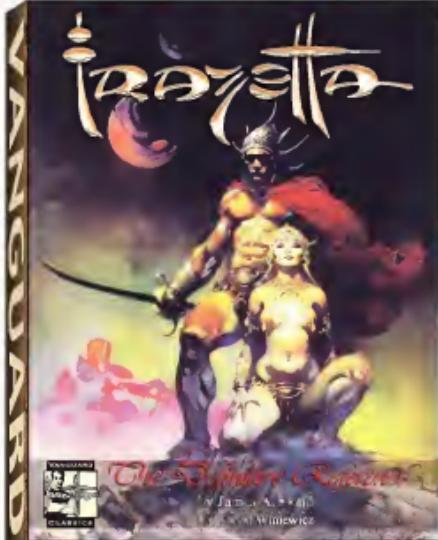
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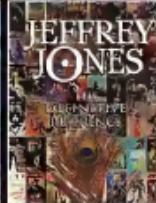
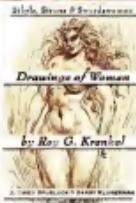
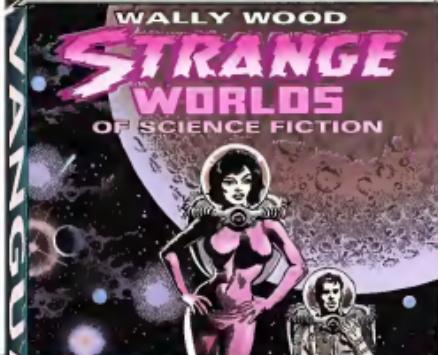
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The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1923)



While Quasimodo, the Hunchback, was just one of Lon Chaney's 1000 faces, it was one of his more notable. Playing the classic Victor Hugo anti-hero, Chaney is unrecognizable under all the makeup, but nevertheless turns in a heart-wrenching performance as the deformed man who simply wants to belong and be loved.

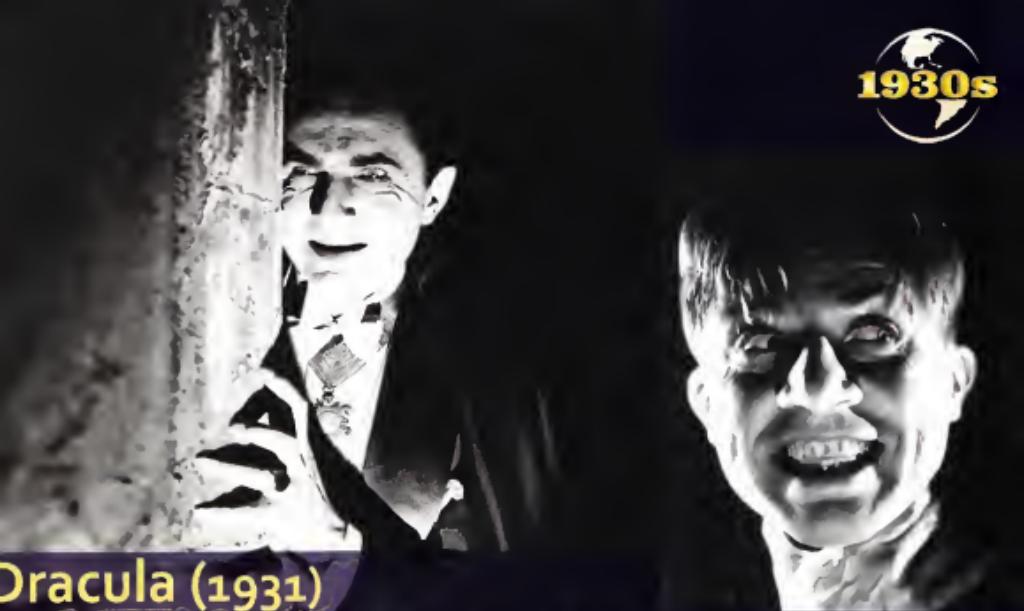


The Cat and the Canary (1927)

One of the few Universal horror silents to not star Lon Chaney, the film concerns a mysterious will left behind by a wealthy man driven insane. Annabelle, the will's beneficiary, must be deemed sane to receive the fortune. As strange occurrences begin to happen and her sanity is questioned, the film takes on horror elements mixed with a classic "whodunit".

The Phantom of the Opera (1925)





Dracula (1931)



Drácula (1931)

The 1931 Spanish-language version of Bram Stoker's classic vampire tale has gone from being an obscure horror movie to a film some consider on par with the Bela Lugosi-led masterpiece. DRÁCULA was filmed on the same sets in 1931 as the Tod Browning classic—using all the same props and costumes—in the evenings and into the early hours of morning, before the US crew arrived. The Spanish crew would look at the dailies from the English-language version and do everything they could to "top" what they had seen.

The Ballad of Dwight Frye

by David-Elijah Nahmod

"I sure need some rest. Sleeping don't come very easy in a straight white vest..."

—Alice Cooper, "The Ballad of Dwight Fry"

He went to his grave believing he'd been forgotten, wondering if he'd ever been noticed at all. His sudden death at age 44 was all the more tragic, as he'd just won a major role in *WILSON*, an upcoming biographical film on the life of the American president. It was a role that could have reignited a once promising film career that crashed and burned shortly after it began.

In 1931, arguably the most important year in the history of horror cinema, Dwight Frye had plum roles in the two films that launched a genre. He could break your heart as the fly-eating Renfield in Tod Browning's *DRACULA* (1931). Though the film's unexpected success is rightfully credited to Bela Lugosi's larger-than-life screen presence in the title role, it was Frye who gave the

film a soul as Renfield, thrust into a situation that was not of his own choosing. He was an ordinary man who found himself the victim of a vampire. As the slave of Count Dracula, he did things that were contrary to his true, gentle nature. But the real Renfield lay just below the surface, fighting desperately to regain control of a mind and body that were no longer his own. Renfield was wracked with guilt. He was compelled to obey his master, but he also wanted to save his master's victims.

In his final scene, a few moments before Dracula fades to black, the master holds his treacherous slave accountable. In the film's most powerful and emotional scene, the mad and tormented soul of Renfield pleads for mercy, to no avail. When the Count callously tosses Renfield's dead body down the stairs of Carfax Abbey, tears accompany the more obvious chills.

There's no denying that the Castle Dracula sequences in Tod Browning's *DRACULA* are profoundly eerie, due in part to Bela Lugosi's magnificent persona, the settings, and Karl Freund's fluid, ahead-of-its-time cinematography. But truth be told, the Count, as written for the film, was a largely one-dimensional character: a vicious bloodsucker. Other characters were given no backstory, and come across as flatly as was Dwight Frye's Renfield and Renfield alone who emerged from the film as its only fully developed character, and it was Frye's power and range as a performer that enabled him to achieve this.

Later that same year, Frye appeared as the hunchbacked Fritz in James Whale's *FRANKENSTEIN*. Whale's horror films are now legendary for their gallows humor, a directorial style the auteur first employed in *THE OLD DARK HOUSE* (1932). But Whale's *FRANKENSTEIN* was dark and relentlessly grim, a terrifying



Not many actors could retain their air of poise and sophistication while having to eat insects as well as Dwight Frye did.

morality fable on the pitfalls of what happens when a mere mortal tries to emulate God. The film has heart, of course, courtesy of Boris Karloff's phenomenal and groundbreaking performance as the artificially created man-child.

FRANKENSTEIN was largely devoid of humor. Yet there are still laughs to be found, and these came courtesy of Dwight Frye, who improvised little bits of macabre humor that weren't in the script. Whale allowed the actor to "go for it", and Frye delivered. The sequence in which a manic Fritz runs up the stairway in the watchtower, rapidly talking to himself while stopping to pull up his sock, is an unforgettable magical moment. This was all Frye's doing—improv at its best.

Two years later, in Whale's THE INVISIBLE MAN (1933), Frye appeared briefly as a newspaper reporter. His nameless character had a mere six lines. In spite of being given a flatly written, non-character to play, the actor was very much in the moment, conveying his usual strong onscreen persona. Like all great actors, Dwight Frye never "phoned it in".

THE INVISIBLE MAN bit was only a hint of what was to come. By 1940, Frye was reunited with co-star Michael Visaroff, who had played the innkeeper during the early moments of DRACULA. In that first film, Frye had a colorful supporting role, with appropriate billing. Visaroff was unbillied. In THE SON OF MONTE CRISTO (1940), Visaroff had billing, and Frye did not. Two years later, Frye had exactly two lines as an unnamed villager in Universal's GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN (1942), appearing in an unbillied, unimportant bit in a film series he'd helped to launch.

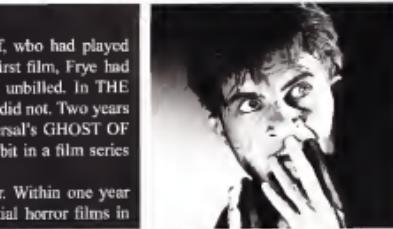
Dwight Frye arrived in Hollywood a celebrated Broadway star. Within one year he delivered unforgettable performances in the two most influential horror films in history. He should have enjoyed a long, lucrative career as a character actor.

In retrospect, the swift collapse of Dwight Frye's film career makes little sense. He paid his dues and proved himself. He was a competent professional, always prepared and reportedly easy to work with. But Hollywood is often a fickle and disloyal place. In Tinseltown, one can be relegated to the "D" list on the mere whim of others, for little or no reason.

Every time an opportunity to revive his career presented itself, fate stood in Frye's way. He was given a sizable, Renfield-like role in Frank Strayer's THE VAMPIRE BAT (1933), but the major studios viewed poverty-row productions such as this with disdain. Frye's performance as the mentally retarded, bat-loving Herman was Renfield revisited. Though he gave a strong performance and enacted another heartbreaking death scene, the film did nothing for his rapidly declining career.

Whale cast him as Karl, another lab assistant, in BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935), the crowning achievement of Hollywood's Golden Age of Horror. Karl was a showcase for the actor, a character who was even madder than the mad doctor, and who had no compunctions about killing. As always, Frye gave his all, but BRIDE was produced at a time when "morality minded" religious groups were protesting the content of Hollywood studio films. Karl was involved in some rather unsavory activities, and the censors cried foul. When the film was released, much of Frye's footage had been cut.

But at least he was still in the film. Four years later, Frye worked on SON OF FRANKENSTEIN (1939). Not a trace of him appears in the final cut. For more than a decade, Dwight Frye appeared in dozens of films. More often than not, he appeared in small, unbillied bits, always



From dashing to devious, Frye was as comfortable in makeup as he was out.

hoping that fate would offer him a second chance.

During the 1940s, he began to work nights at the Lockheed plant in Los Angeles while continuing to pursue film roles by day. The Lockheed work was, he said, his contribution to the war effort. But the truth is that he most likely just needed the money. He had a wife, a son, and a widowed mother to support, and working as a glorified extra wasn't going to pay the bills.

In taking the Lockheed job, Dwight Frye may have inadvertently signed his own death warrant. Now in his forties, the devout Christian Scientist was suffering from heart disease. The toll of working all night at the plant combined with his "day job" in the film industry put a terrible strain on his heart. After his death, it was revealed that he had suffered a few minor heart attacks while on the job at Lockheed and, as a Christian Scientist, he refused to see a doctor. Was his sudden death in 1943 preventable? Was Frye

a victim not only of his religious beliefs, but also of a cruel Hollywood system that forced him to push himself to the breaking point—to work himself, literally, to death?

There were two final cruel twists of fate in the sad and mysterious saga of Dwight Frye. Both came during his final year. In early 1943, he had a chance to return to Broadway, where his career had achieved so much acclaim during the

1920s. Had he accepted the role of Alexander Hamilton in the play THE PATRIOTS, his New York theater career might have been revived. But in part because he didn't want to be separated from his family, and in part because he felt obligated to contribute to the war effort through his work at Lockheed, Frye let the role of Hamilton slip through his fingers. THE PATRIOTS opened at the National Theater in New York City on January 29, 1943, and ran for 172 performances.

Soon after, Frye auditioned for—and won—the role of Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, in 20th Century Fox's prestigious presidential biographical film WILSON. The Darryl F. Zanuck production was set to be the studio's big Oscar push for 1944. Outside of poverty row quickies, Secretary Baker was the first sizable film role accorded to Dwight Frye in many years. The actor was overjoyed. This was the film that could very well revive his sagging fortunes and bring him the acclaim he so richly deserved. The film would also have broken his stereotype as an onscreen lunatic and allowed him to play a variety of roles.

But on November 5, 1943, the 44 year old Dwight Frye celebrated his newfound fortune by taking his small family out to see a movie. They attended the Pantages Theater on Hollywood Boulevard. On the way home, as they boarded a bus, Frye was struck down by a massive coronary. Before the night was over, the actor was dead.

It's often been said that great actors leave their audience wanting more. That was certainly true with Dwight Frye. In 1931, shortly before making DRACULA, Frye worked with Bela Lugosi in THE BLACK CAMEL (1931), the second in the Charley Chan series. Frye appeared as Jessop, a butler who, in this tale of murder, actually "did it". It wasn't a particularly large role, nor was it a walk-on. In the film's final scene, Jessop is revealed to be the killer. Mid-scene, Frye, whose characterization has been quiet and laid back throughout the film, suddenly goes mad. He pulls out a gun and screams maniacally at his accusers, confessing to everything. A mere thirty seconds later, the words "The End" appear on screen. It's a wonderful, albeit brief and frustrating moment. Jessop's confession crackles with electricity—the actor literally burns a hole through the screen. Within the context of this film, it was his moment in the sun, and he made the most of it. Had there been more of Jessop, more of Frye's power as a performer sprinkled throughout the film, then perhaps THE BLACK CAMEL could have been a bona-fide classic, and not just a fun, if somewhat forgettable, B-movie.

In every performance he gave, including the later bit roles, Dwight Frye left viewers wanting more. No matter how small the role, he plunged into it with gusto. This was particularly apparent in films like THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN, where he was so sadly wasted after having proven his powers as a performer time and time again.

Dwight Frye (1899-1943) was born under a very dark cloud. Life wasn't kind to him. The Ballad of Dwight Frye is a profoundly sad song. One can only hope that somehow, somewhere, the spirit of Dwight Frye can know that we have not forgotten him—that seven decades after his tragic passing, he stands as a beloved icon.



Frye's performance as Fritz set the stage for all others who would play the hunchbacked assistant of anyone with the surname of Frankenstein.

Frankenstein (1931)



RICHARD J SCHELL BACHS IN MY WRITE MIND

THE NOT-QUITE-OFFICIAL BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO WHO'S WHO IN UNIVERSAL'S FRANKENSTEIN MOVIES



Since *Famous Monsters* is celebrating 100 years of Universal Pictures, I thought it would be a good time to introduce some of you newer monster lovers to a series of FRANKENSTEIN films that were made between 1931 and 1948. These films played by a set of casting rules that are so confusing, I'd be willing to bet newcomers could build their own particle accelerator faster than

they could learn who plays whom in each of them. Well fear not, dear newbies. I am going to take on the monumental task of pointing out the casting inconsistencies of these films so you'll have a more rewarding viewing experience when you finally get around to watching them. And since I've always believed that if you don't know where horror's been, you're less likely to know where it's going, I'm telling you, in no uncertain terms, to park your butts on the couch and catch these flicks, pronto. I'm warning you. Don't make me come over there.

FRANKENSTEIN (1931)

Okay, this one's pretty easy. Colin Clive plays the title character. No, not the monster. Contrary to popular belief, the "Frankenstein" in FRANKENSTEIN refers to the guy with the scalpel. Colin Clive plays Henry Frankenstein, even though in Mary Shelley's book, Frankenstein's name is Victor. John Boles plays Henry's best friend Victor Moritz, even though in the book the best friend's name is Henry.

See? Not confusing at all.

Mac Clarke plays Elizabeth, the woman who will marry Henry Frankenstein, and Dwight Frye does a wonderful job as Henry's hunch-backed assistant.

Igor?

Nope. Fritz.

Last but not least, we come to The Monster—skillfully played, according to the main credits, by "?" Now, "?" went on to become a horror icon! But back in 1931, it took the full 70 minutes that FRANKENSTEIN ran for audiences to find out that "?" was a chap named Boris Karloff.

BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935)

When we last checked in with our characters, Henry had been beaten to within an inch of his life and tossed off a windmill. Fritz had been beaten to within an inch of his life, then about two inches further, and was left well-hanged; Elizabeth had gone from bride-to-be to nearly a widow-to-be, and The Monster—the cause of all of this mess—had been crushed by heavy wooden beams

and burnt to a crisp in a windmill fire. I'm here to tell you that it's time to celebrate, because they're all back for BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN. Well, kinda.

Henry, a bit bloodied, is ready to get back to the matters at hand—and that includes finally marrying Elizabeth. But if he had his heart set on marrying an Elizabeth who looks like Mae Clarke, he was plain out of luck. Valerie Hobson was the new actress in the role of the soon-to-be "Bride Of (Henry) Frankenstein," and except for the fact that they had completely different hair styles, hair lengths, hair color, body types, and facial features, the two actresses could have been twins!

Dwight Frye is back as the assistant.

Fritz?

Nope. Karl.

You remember that in the first film, Fritz was hanged for his trouble. Well, Fritz and Karl really could be twins. Sure, there's Karl's lack of a hump, a few differences in his facial makeup, and his slightly more sinister attitude. But Karl is every bit the Fritz of this picture, and the fact that the same guy played both characters makes the two prime for comparison.

Maria's father, played by Michael Mark in FRANKENSTEIN, is now Reginald Barlow.

Fortunately, Karloff again plays The Monster and is joined by Ernest Thesiger and Elsa Lanchester.

Oh, one more thing: John Carradine has an uncredited role as a huncher. Just brain-bank that one for later.

SON OF FRANKENSTEIN (1939)

Oh, the times, they are a-changin'. Unlike the FRANKENSTEIN/BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN arc, SON takes place after a bit of time has passed. Clive is gone, the Elizabethan tag team of Clarke and Hobson are gone, even Dwight Frye is gone—although reports that he's an extra in a crowd scene somewhere exist to this day. (I've watched this film over forty times and never seen him.)

But for all that SON OF FRANKENSTEIN is missing, there are three worthy additions: Basil Rathbone plays the lead as Henry and Elizabeth's here-Wolf. Lionel Atwill plays Inspector Krogh—a guy who said he'd give his right arm to meet The Monster, and The Monster took him up on it. Finally, there is an appearance by the man who supposedly gave up the role that made Karloff a star: Bela Lugosi. Not as The Monster—no, Karloff's still quite literally in the picture. Lugosi plays The Monster's friend, caregiver, and brains of the outfit, named Igor!

Michael Mark and Lionel Belmore are councilors in SON OF FRANKENSTEIN. Mark, as previously mentioned, played Maria's father in FRANKENSTEIN, and Belmore played the burgomaster in the same film.

THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN (1942)

Bela's back as Igor! That said, toss everything else you think you've learned out the proverbial window—it's a whole new ball game. The biggest no-show is Karloff. Taking his place as The Monster is Lon Chaney, Jr. Lionel Atwill is back for another go round, but instead of Krogh, he plays the fully-appended Dr. Bohmer.

And this film also brings back Dwight Frye for his third go round! Fritz? Nope. Karl? No, sir. He's an uncredited villager. (No false reports this time. I saw him with my own eyes—about two and a half minutes into the movie.)

Michael Mark and Lionel Belmore are back as councilors in THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN—which wouldn't even merit a mention if they hadn't been killed by The Monster in SON OF FRANKENSTEIN. Maybe Universal should have called this installment THE GHOSTS OF FRANKENSTEIN.

FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN (1943)

Chaney's back! No, not as The Monster—but Larry Talbot, the Wolf Man.

Lugosi's back! No, not as Igor—as The Monster! (Yeah, I know. First he turns down the role, and then twelve years later...) Atwill is back! No, not as Dr. Bohmer—as the Mayor of Vasaria.

Frye is back! Not as Fritz, Karl, or an uncredited villager. This time he's Rudi, a townsmen.

Finally, Doris Lloyd, Dr. Frankenstein's housekeeper in THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN, is back as Larry Talbot's hospital nurse. Obviously those night classes paid off.

So, the only thing you can count on in FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN is that you can't count on anything in FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN.

HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1944)

Fanfare, please: Boris Karloff returns to the FRANKENSTEIN franchise for one last time. But don't expect to see him in his familiar asphalt-spreader boots. This time out, he's Doctor Gustav Niemann, a part-time man of science and full-time nutjob. Niemann might just be the maddest of Universal's mad scientists.

John Carradine is back, too, for the first time since he played a hunter in BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN. He's given something more substantial to sink his teeth into: the role of Dracula. Atwill, no surprise here, returns, but not as anyone he's been before. In HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN, he plays Inspector Amz. Michael Mark, who's played everything from Maria's Pop to an alive/dead/alive councilor, is back as a Vasarian who is kidnapped, then killed, by Doris Niemann. In fact, the only actor who remains the same character as in the last film is Lon Chaney, Jr. as The Wolf Man.

Fan favorites J. Carrol Naish, George Zucco and Glenn Strange (taking his first turn as The Monster) round out a really fine cast.

HOUSE OF DRACULA (1945)

Finally, a shiny beacon of light! Karloff's name might be off the credits, but HOUSE OF DRACULA is a monster-fest and everyone wants in! Carradine's back as Drac; Chaney returns as The Wolf Man, and Glenn Strange plays The Monster again. Yep, HOUSE OF DRACULA is one big happy family reunion.

Oh, I forgot Lionel Atwill. He's in the movie, but he shows up for his fifth Frankenstein film in a row playing his fifth character in a row—this time as Police Inspector Holtz.

ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN (1948)

The swan song for the Frankenstein series has many wonderful moments. Only Strange and Chaney return as characters from the previous film. But Lugosi is back, and in top form, as Dracula; the Universal monster he made his own. To add icing to this "farewell" cake, as the film's final scene plays out, we are treated to a bit of Vincent Price—a man more of the Cushing/Lee generation of horror stars than of Karloff and Lugosi. A fitting end, I think.

Okay, new meat! There you have it—a short guide to the who's who of the Frankenstein series. Just to recap: four stars and one punctuation mark play The Monster; Mac Clarke might be good enough to date, but you marry Valerie Hobson, Dwight Frye and Lionel Atwill will play anything once but nothing twice; and no matter whether a hunter or a vampire, chances are John Carradine's going to try to kill you.

Space does not permit me to cover why The Monster speaks in some films but not others, or which stuntmen played The Monster in each scene of FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN. Maybe we'll tackle that little slice of insanity in FM 863: Universal's 200th Anniversary.

Til then...





The Mummy (1932)



The Invisible Man (1933)

Before we had green screens and digital FX, Hollywood had to figure out the old-fashioned way to make a man invisible. The result: one of Universal's most beloved horror films. When the studio couldn't secure Boris Karloff, the role of the Invisible Man fell to Claude Rains in his first acting job stateside. Despite having to spend the vast majority of the film either wrapped in bandages or completely off-screen, Rains turns in a dynamic performance that helped to launch his prolific cinema career.



Murders in the Rue Morgue (1932)



The Old Dark House (1932)



The Black Cat (1932) 67%



Bride of Frankenstein (1935)



Werewolf of London (1935)



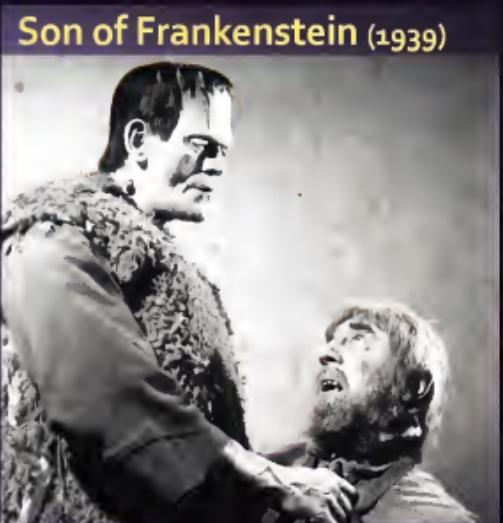
Before Lon Chaney Jr. became a legend as the Wolf Man, Henry Hull turned in an iconic (although less makeup-intensive) performance as his own lycanthope-run-amok. Despite Hull not opting for a full wolf getup, Jack Pierce's wizardry is on display, creating a drastic transformation with minimal makeup. From the Warren Zevon classic track to the additional AMERICAN WEREWOLF films, there is little doubt as to the lasting legacy of this monster masterpiece.



The Raven (1935)



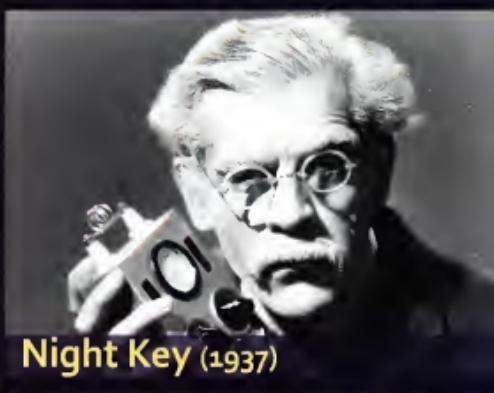
Dracula's Daughter (1936)



Son of Frankenstein (1939)



The Invisible Ray (1936)



Night Key (1937)



Tower of London (1939)

While the film is celebrated as Karloff's third and final turn as The Monster, critics and fans alike tend to highlight the subtle and understated performance of Bela Lugosi as Ygor. Add in Basil Rathbone's turn as the son of Henry Frankenstein and the stage has been set for one of horror's most classic triumphs.

DRACULA vs. FRANKENSTEIN

by Peter Martin

Superhero movies like MARVEL'S THE AVENGERS, THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, and THE DARK KNIGHT RISES are all the rage this summer, but long before super-powered heroes leapt from the pages of comic books to the big screen, two legendary monsters arose from 19th century literature to terrorize modern audiences. DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN, released by Universal Studios in 1931, won both popular and critical acclaim while establishing archetypes that are slavishly followed to this day.

DRACULA, which had enjoyed a popular stage revival in the 1920s, was chosen as the studio's first horror production in the sound era, and Lon Chaney was envisioned as the star, with Tod Browning set to direct. This made sense, because Chaney had enjoyed great success in Universal's THE HUNCHBACK OF NORTRE DAME (1923) and THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (1925), and he and Browning's creative collaboration dated back to 1919. Alas, 'twas not to be, as Chaney, suffering the effects of lung cancer, was too ill to take the part. Instead, after much deliberation, the choice role of Count Dracula went to Bela Lugosi, who had played the character on stage.

After production began, Chaney succumbed to his illness, and it's quite possible that the death of Browning's longtime friend and ally proved to be too much of an emotional burden for him to bear at the time. Reports surfaced that Browning paid little attention during filming, leaving cinematographer Karl Freund to run things on the set. Be that as it may, DRACULA had a sensational effect upon moviegoers when it was released in February 1931.

Of course, unlike any horror picture today, DRACULA did not suffer from over-familiarity. Save for the relative handful of people who had read the source material or attended the Broadway production, no one knew what to expect. "The story of the strangest passion the world has ever known!", as one poster advertised, caught everyone off guard, but word of mouth must have been spectacularly good.

Nowadays, the long stretches of silent, minimal activity on screen might test the patience of modern viewers accustomed to a much quicker pace, action loudly underscored by music, sound effects, and comic relief. In contrast, DRACULA took an über-serious approach to its subject matter, which may be why it resonated so deeply with audiences in 1931. The very idea of an elegant, bloodsucking creature must have been chilling, as was the thought that the creature could change from human to bat and back again to escape detection. Without meaning to do



so, DRACULA laid the groundwork for countless movies to come with its archetypical anti-hero, the well-dressed and seductive villain who engenders sympathy even as he proves to be a deadly menace. It is overstating things to say that all such anti-heroes spring from DRACULA, but the film's influence upon succeeding generations cannot be minimized.

What has especially remained powerful is the image of Dracula as a creature of the night, someone who can inspire dread simply by the knowledge of his existence. Left to his own devices, Dracula has the potential to conquer the world, turning all of mankind into 'the living undead,' and that is an underlying fear that is exploited time and time again, manifested in popular mainstream pictures and horror flicks alike.

After completing DRACULA, Browning moved to MGM, where he worked again under the stewardship of legendary producer Irving Thalberg, who had brought a touch of class to Universal in the early 1920s. Browning's FREAKS, however, with its cast of real-life circus performers, proved too disturbing; it was one thing to consider a bloodsucking vampire in the abstract, and quite another to be confronted with the close-up reality of physical disability on the big screen. The poor reception to his long-cherished project effectively curtailed Browning's career; he only worked sporadically after that. FREAKS eventually gained cult status in later years.

While Browning was unable to complete any other project that matched DRACULA in its popular appeal, James Whale appeared to have his finger on the pulse of the common man, directing a series of pictures that lay the groundwork for much of what aspires to be popcorn entertainment today. Born in England, Whale got involved in theatre productions as an actor, set designer, and director after World War I. The success of his 1928 play JOURNEY'S END led to an engagement to direct it on Broadway, and thence to Hollywood, which was desperate for stage professionals who could help deal with the transition to sound. Whale worked with the actors on WINGS, the first Academy Award winner for Best Picture, and then directed the film version of JOURNEY'S END as well as WATERLOO BRIDGE, another adaptation of a stage play. Wanting to do something different, he took on the challenge of FRANKENSTEIN.

Browning's style was still married to the silent films on which he learned and developed his craft, but Whale was unencumbered by the sometimes-stilted traditions of the silent era, and felt free to move his camera to follow the action, notably in tracking shots that are still mesmerizing to watch. FRANKENSTEIN is a remarkably fresh and vibrant picture, enlivened by snappy delivery of the dialogue by Colin Clive as Dr. Frankenstein, Mae Clarke as his beloved Elizabeth, John Boles as her friend Victor Moritz, and Edward Van Sloan as medical colleague Dr. Waldman. Few



Tod Browning with the cast of his film FREAKS
(Mr. Browning is the one in the center with the sweater).

moments in cinema are as electrifying as seeing Frankenstein's creature come to life, with (literal) sparks flying and the good doctor crying out, "It's alive! It's alive!"

While DRACULA had a cold, cruel, villainous hero, FRANKENSTEIN featured a tremendously exciting scientist who, for all intents and purposes, has taken leave of his senses. The mad scientist who is married to his work and frantically driven to accomplish his goals, ignoring any peril in his path, quickly became a stock character, a venerable device that could be used to defy logic in movie after movie. The character is even in evidence in several of this summer's blockbusters, including THE AVENGERS and THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, proving that Universal's film motifs of 1931 are still very much alive today. *mfp*



A bird in the hand is worth. . . oh, never mind!

JAMES WHALE'S OTHER MONSTERS

by Peter Martin



In addition to FRANKENSTEIN, James Whale directed three other horror pictures, in each one creating a different sort of monster than the one shocked into life by Doctor Frankenstein, mixing the horror movie formula with other genres to create something entirely new.

In the well above-average spook-fest THE OLD DARK HOUSE, Whale reteamed with Boris Karloff, though Karloff was relegated to playing a mute butler. Melvyn Douglas, Raymond Massey, and Gloria Stuart seek shelter at an isolated, decrepit mansion in the midst of a storm that threatens to wash them away. Little do they know that the house harbors a family of oddballs; together they form a collective beast, a monstrous entity revealed in the dark shadows. Whale's combination of (somewhat) lighter horror and a highly dysfunctional family was ahead of its time; the film performed below box office expectations in the U.S., though it did well in England.

The monster in 1933's THE INVISIBLE MAN is also the lead character. Dr. Jack Griffin (Claude Rains), a brilliant chemist who develops a formula for invisibility and then recklessly tests it on himself, unaware that one of the ingredients will drive him to insanity. Whale drives the plot forward at a furious pace, hurling the viewer into the action at once. Rather than a straight horror movie, it's more of an adventure or chase thriller with a monstrous character at its core—a character that is fatally flawed by the all-too-human weaknesses of ambition and impatience.

Whale then reconceptualized his most famous monster. BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935) may be considered the first post-modern horror film, complete with a prologue featuring Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (Elsa Lanchester) discussing the story with her husband Percy Shelley and their friend Lord Byron. Frankenstein's Monster comes back to life, initially as a much more primal force of nature, killing without provocation. We are constantly reminded, however, that the Monster is of human origin, fully capable of learning from his experiences, as tenderly spelled out in his peaceful encounter with a blind hermit. Whale masterfully orchestrates the drama, suspense, and pathos, balanced by a slice of delirious fantasy in the person of Doctor Pretorius (Ernest Thesiger), who makes Doc Frankenstein look like a completely rational man.

BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN proved to be the last—and greatest—horror film James Whale made. Universal wanted him to direct DRACULA'S DAUGHTER, but budget and script problems delayed things, and Whale moved on to the wonderfully fizzy comedy REMEMBER LAST NIGHT? and the glorious musical stylings of SHOW BOAT. His career continued until the late 1940s, but he was done making monster movies. His legacy, however, happily lives on to this day.

More MONSTERS and SEQUELS

by Peter Martin

Universal Studios, which celebrates its 100th anniversary this year, was co-founded by Carl Laemmle, who quickly took the reins of the company, buying out his co-founders. Naturally, his son Carl Laemmle Jr., who was born in 1908, grew up in the family business. He began serving as a producer while still a teenager, and was appointed as production chief in 1928. With the introduction of sound, the motion picture business was in turmoil, but young Laemmle had his own ideas about how to prosper in a new age—most notably, horror pictures!

DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN came first, followed in 1932 by THE MUMMY, a rather tepid echo of DRACULA's static compositions with less emotional resonance—not surprising, considering that it represents the U.S. directorial debut of DRACULA cinematographer Karl Freund—and MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE, the latter representing the studio's first adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe. MURDERS was also a consolation prize of sorts for writer/director Robert Furey, who'd wanted to direct FRANKENSTEIN.

Subsequently, the studio borrowed more titles from Poe, turning THE BLACK CAT and THE RAVEN into star vehicles for Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi, and then took their first crack at another legendary monster with WEREWOLF OF LONDON. Jack Pierce, the legendary makeup designer who was as responsible as anyone for Universal's signature monster style, created a complex design that star Henry Hull declined to wear, resulting in a simpler version that makes Hull's werewolf alter ego look more like a very hairy man (or Mr. Hyde, as in MGM's DOCTOR JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE) than a ferocious beast.

The first great era of horror filmmaking came to a conclusion in 1936 when Carl Laemmle and his son were forced out of Universal Studios, having lost too much money on films that did not perform at the box office. The studio began a new era that, initially, did not embrace horror, perhaps as a reflection of the new production chief's taste as well as a response to pressure from the Production Code Administration.

In the summer of 1938, a Los Angeles theatre on the brink of bankruptcy booked a triple-bill of DRACULA, FRANKENSTEIN, and SON OF KING KONG that became an overnight sensation, drawing huge crowds and the attention of Universal Studios, which struck 500 new prints of their films and booked them nationwide to fabulous response, a healthy profit, and a new cycle of horror films. For the most part, however, the studio leaned heavily upon past successes.



SON OF FRANKENSTEIN takes places some years after the first two films, introducing us to Wolf van Frankenstein (Basil Rathbone) as he moves his family back to Europe to reclaim his legacy. The villages are none too happy to see him, and with good reason; soon enough, the Monster (one again played by Karloff) reappears—thanks to the caretaking provided by a revenge-minded Ygor (Lugosi). The real struggle, though, is fought by Wolf—against his conscience, his father's damaged reputation, and the evil that is revealed in Ygor. Rathbone's vigorous performance, ahead of his adventures as Sherlock Holmes, smooths over some of the rough spots. Karloff's Monster, however, was reduced to a supporting role, and his "character" regressed into a *pro forma* creature. Uninterested in subjecting himself further to the torturous hours required for makeup, especially given the minimal opportunities to display his thespian skills, Karloff made this his final appearance as the Monster.

The film did well financially, encouraging Universal to crank out sequels to its other famed monsters. THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS, THE INVISIBLE WOMAN, THE MUMMY'S HAND, and others quickly followed, trailed by three-queals such as THE GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN and THE MUMMY'S TOMB.

Of this group, THE WOLF MAN stands out. Benefiting from a superior script by the prolific Curt Siodmark and an emotionally vibrant turn by Lon Chaney, it's the rare example of a sequel that betters the original; BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN

is probably the only other Universal horror picture that meets that qualification. Whereas WEREWOLF OF LONDON suggested that a plant might turn a man into a wolf under the light of the moon, THE WOLF MAN spelled it out more plainly.

THE WOLF MAN also had the advantage of featuring an everyday hero, as opposed to the mad scientist who had so often served as the protagonist in these pictures. Larry Talbot (Chaney) is a likable fellow who returns home after the death of his brother. He wants to repair his relationship with his estranged father (Claude Rains) and assume his proper position as heir, even though he's not interested in the privileges and wealth that he will inherit. He flirts with a pretty shop girl named Gwen (Evelyn Ankers), and later rescues her friend from a wolf.

What Larry doesn't realize is that the wolf is actually the accursed Bela (Bela Lugosi), who has suffered from the pains of being a werewolf for many years. Now Larry has been infected, and will continually transform into a werewolf and murder anyone who gets in his way until he, too, is put down like an animal.



Middle Left: Universal as it looked at the outset of its Burbank, CA adventure.
All Other Photos: Shots of Universal at its initial location in Fort Lee, NJ.



Real Men of Genius:
Albert Einstein and Carl Laemmle.

Chancy, with his big build and sad eyes, makes for a forlorn monster, haunted by his actions even as he yearns for Gwen and seeks to redeem himself before his father. The film's unforgettable resolution is freighted with psychological baggage that cannot be unpacked easily.

Chaney continued to play the character throughout the decade, facing off against a new foe in *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN*, the first monster team-up, followed by *HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN*, the first time that most of Universal's signature creations all came together in a single picture. The story takes place after the events of *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN*, which called for a creative resurrection of characters; and then, presaging the challenges faced by Joss Whedon in *MARVEL'S THE AVENGERS*, three more monsters—Dracula (John Carradine), a mad doctor (Boris Karloff), and the Hunchback (J. Carroll Nash). The action revolves around the vengeful medical professional, which meant that the Wolf Man and Frankenstein's Monster (now played by Glenn Strange) felt like afterthoughts.

The "monster rally" concept continued with *HOUSE OF DRACULA*, but the second horror cycle was running on fumes. It would take a comedy duo to breathe new life into the genre.

HOW TO MAKE A HORROR COMEDY

BY PETER MARTIN

With Universal's second cycle of horror creatively exhausted, it would require a completely fresh approach to make anyone pay attention, much less buy tickets. Thus, an idea was hatched to pit Bud Abbott and Lou Costello, still under contract at Universal and churning out popular pictures at a rapid rate, against the studio's most iconic monsters.

The idea of transforming horror characters into comic punching bags sounds at best, disrespectful—this was evidently Boris Karloff's point of view, who refused to appear in the movie, though he agreed to promote it—but Abbott and Costello had first considered the idea for a show on Broadway. And as things turned out, *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN* represented a high water mark for the comedy duo's film work, and also one of the strongest impressions that the monsters had made since they had been sequel-ized ad infinitum.

Certainly it helps that Bela Lugosi reprised his role as Count Dracula for only the second (and last) time, and Lon Chaney returned as Larry Talbot (AKA The Wolf Man). Glenn Strange, in his third performance as Frankenstein's Monster, didn't add anything to the mythos, but that wasn't a requirement. As the title implies, *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN* is, first and foremost, a vehicle for the comedy stylings of Bud and Lou.

The story kicks off with Larry Talbot foiled in his desperate attempt to stop a deadly plan from batching. We don't learn all the details until later, but suffice it to say that it involves Dracula, Frankenstein's Monster, a house of horrors, a brain transplant, and world domination. Abbott and Costello play baggage clerks who are dragged into the mess, and their reactions to the madness that erupts around them are priceless.

What makes the film so funny, delighting young and old alike? Perhaps it's the sight of classic monsters playing classic straight men to classic comedians. Or maybe it's that all the characters are treated with a due amount of respect. Though the comedy prevails, the horror aspects are given sufficient weight to provide ballast to what is otherwise very light entertainment, thus setting an excellent pattern for future horror comedies to follow. Bud and Lou would go on to face the Invisible Man, the Killer (Boris Karloff), and the Mummy, but *ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN* served as a bittersweet swan song for Dracula, the Monster, and the Wolf Man, who did not appear in another Universal picture for decades.



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JACK PIERCE: THE MAN OF 1000 MONSTERS

BY SCOTT ESSMAN

As we look back on Universal Studios' 100-year existence, no individual is more significant to the studio's early success than genius makeup artist Jack Pierce, the legendary monster maker who worked at Universal during their classic 1930s and 1940s horror cycle. From 1930 to 1947, Pierce created some of cinema's most distinguishable screen characters.

Pierce's early years are those of the classic immigrant success story. After immigrating to the United States from Greece at the turn of the century, he attempted many different careers. At one time, he even tried to play professional baseball (Pierce was a lifelong sports fan). He soon started in the fledgling motion picture industry for Harry Culver, founder of Culver City. Pierce managed movie theaters in the 1910s before working in front of the camera as a stuntman and actor.

At this time, Universal was a nascent little studio in the San Fernando Valley, referred to as

"Universal City" in 1915. The brainchild of former haberdasher Carl Laemmle, Universal was the home to many silent shorts of the 1910s. Pierce was one of just many working actors in these first silents. To get as many acting jobs as possible, Pierce learned to create his own unique makeups, transforming his entire face and body to become an Indian, cowboy, antagonist, or any part that a script required.

After Jack Pierce worked as an actor and assistant director at Vitagraph and the original Fox Studios in the 1920s, Universal made a huge change. In 1927, Universal founder Carl Laemmle appointed his son, Carl Laemmle, Jr., head of production as a 21st birthday present. Called "Junior" by his peers and colleagues, Laemmle decided to make Jack Pierce the studio's first makeup department head.

Since the studio had had huge successes with the Lon Chaney films THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME and THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA in the mid-1920s, the Junior Laemmle decided to produce new film versions of the classic horror novels. One of the first was Victor Hugo's THE MAN WHO LAUGHS, for

which Pierce devised the makeup for lead actor Conrad Veidt playing Gwynplaine. Many have cited the makeup as being the inspiration for the Joker character from the Batman comics of the 1940s.

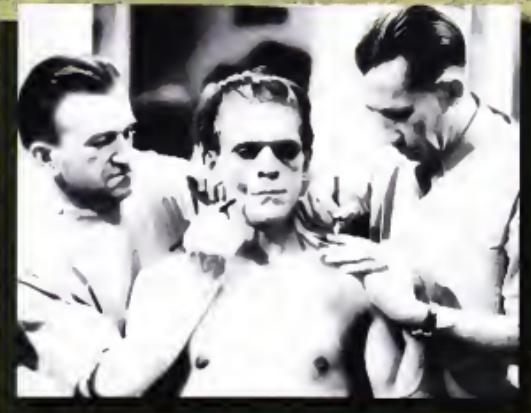
Carl Laemmle Junior was Jack Pierce's confidant, boss, and spiritual guide in the early 1930s. Laemmle's personal tastes couldn't have been any more fortuitous for Pierce. In 1930, the horror classic DRACULA was

produced, and though star Bela Lugosi refused to let Pierce apply his makeup (the actor had come from the stage where he always did his own work), Pierce came up with the styling for the vampire. As a result, while Pierce is not credited with Dracula's look, his imprint is all over the film.

Immediately following the success of DRACULA, Junior wanted a follow-up, which led to the production of FRANKENSTEIN in

1931. Though many have argued as to whether director James Whale, actor Boris Karloff, or Junior himself contributed to the monster's unique makeup, the driving force behind the look of the character unquestionably belonged to Jack Pierce. Every morning, Karloff sat for four uncomfortable hours, suffering from the makeup's high level of toxicity, as Pierce and his assistants applied the head, facial buildup, and layers of padding and costume modifications that would make him into the movies' most memorable monster. For the 43-year-old Karloff and 42-year-old Pierce, it was a remarkable achievement; their legend would have been guaranteed even if they had stopped their unique artist-performer collaboration right then and there. But this was only the beginning.

One could make the case that Pierce and Karloff's many collaborations were the best pairing of makeup artist and actor in screen history—at least until Rick Baker did his many magical films with Eddie Murphy. Furthering Pierce and Karloff's combined reputations, the two teamed up the following year to create two films: THE OLD DARK HOUSE and THE MUMMY.



Another Whale film, *THE OLD DARK HOUSE* is a classic haunted house film if not an all-time great. But *THE MUMMY* is another matter altogether. Pierce created several makeups for the movie, including a fully decrepit mummy character, in addition to a series of deteriorating makeups for the climax of the picture. Of course, Pierce's crowning achievement, perhaps second only to the Frankenstein Monster, was Pierce's full top-to-bottom makeup on Karloff as the Im-Ho-Tep character at the film's beginning. Though the actual creature is only seen on film for a matter of seconds, it was another unforgettable achievement in cinema horror when Im-Ho-Tep came alive and paraded across an unearthed Egyptian tomb. Karloff spent most of the picture as Ardath Bey, another Pierce incarnation: a doomed prince looking for his lost bride. It was yet another memorable makeup that transformed Karloff into a withered, living mummy, complete with fez hat.

In the early 1930s, the Laemmles tried to get new cinematic treatments of *PHANTOM* and *HUNCHBACK* off the ground. Lon

Chaney had died in 1930, leaving the door open to recreate those classic films with new sound incarnations, but many of Universal's efforts stalled. A version of *THE WOLF MAN* with Boris Karloff was planned, but this, too, would be derailed due to production problems. In their place, Universal decided to produce a sequel to a film that had already worked wonders for them, starting a trend that would result in numerous Dracula, Frankenstein, and Mummy spin-offs which became their trademark. First up was what would be the final horror film in the Laemmle period, *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN*. Pierce revamped his first version of the monster with a burned forehead and clamps for the top of his head, and also created the famous makeup and designed the electric hairstyle for Elsa Lanchester's Bride. Once again, Pierce had created an iconic movie character that only appeared onscreen very briefly at the end of the film. Then, in 1937, in an instance of commerce overwhelming art, the Laemmles sold the studio, ushering in a series of revolving studio heads at Universal for the next 10 years.



Pierce using legendary actors as a canvas to bring his monsters to life.

Clockwise from upper left: Claude Rains as *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*, Lon Chaney Jr. in *THE WOLF MAN*, Boris Karloff in *SON OF FRANKENSTEIN*, and Boris Karloff in *THE MUMMY*.



"Just a little of the sides, Jack. I'm trying to grow it out."

In the many comingings and goings of Universal executives in the late 1930s and early 1940s, Pierce managed to retain his level of high-quality character makeups in several cranked-out sequels and B-movies. For Bela Lugosi, with whom Pierce had locked horns several years earlier on DRACULA, Pierce created Ygor in 1939's SON OF FRANKENSTEIN. Concealed as a man who couldn't be hanged, the bearded, gnarled-toothed wretch became Lugosi's most original character in years and put him back on the map. Karloff's makeup was revised yet again for that film, his last stand as the iconic Frankenstein character. Two years later, Pierce pulled out all the stops for THE WOLF MAN with Lon Chaney, Jr. in the title role. Though the two did not reportedly get along—Chaney did not like wearing the makeup or undergoing the lengthy application and removal period—Pierce excelled again with his werewolf concept, utilizing a design he had created for Karloff a decade earlier. THE WOLF MAN became true horror classic, and Pierce's version of the character has been the model for the numerous werewolves that have since come to the screen.

The final, original Universal Pierce makeup arrived in 1943 with a new PHANTOM OF THE OPERA movie. Starring Claude Rains, it would be the only Jack Pierce monster movie shot in color. Though his treatment of Rains' scarred makeup—revealed only at the end of the film—was cut down at the request of the producers (Pierce's original concept was considered too hideous), it stands as another horror movie landmark. Most of

the other makeups in this period were rekindlings of earlier characters: mummies, vampires, Frankenstein Monsters, and wolf men were conjured for various sequels that ran from 1940 to 1945. Pierce even created a new beast for the Jungle Captive/Captive Wild Woman films. But the quality of the films and makeups were generally not as inspired as his films of the 1930s.

Jack Pierce's reign at Universal ended shortly after World War II, when the studio merged with International Pictures and replaced many of its department heads. He had been a makeup supervisor for 19 years and worked at the studio for 30 years, but Pierce ended his career working in low-budget independent films and television projects during the final 20 years of his life. Some of his later films included CREATION OF THE HUMANOIDs in 1962 and BEAUTY AND THE BEAST in 1963. His last project was working as makeup department head for the TV show MR. ED from 1961-1964, wherein one of his final challenges was for aging star Alan Young to play his own father.

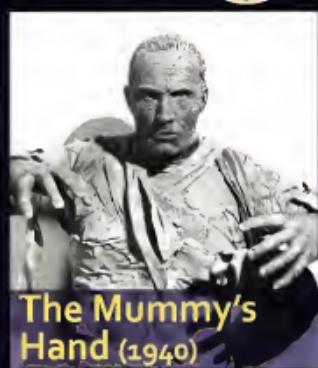
Jack Pierce died in virtual obscurity in 1968. However, today's artists still view Pierce's work as a relevant force in the annals of cinema craft, and Pierce as a man and wholly untouched talent has been honored with a tribute DVD, a lifetime achievement award by the makeup union, and a proposed forthcoming "star" on Hollywood Boulevard.



The Invisible Man Returns (1940)



Black Friday (1940)



The Mummy's Hand (1940)



The Invisible Woman (1940)



Wolf Man (1941)

There is no doubt that Lon Chaney Jr. was already a successful actor prior to this film. But unlike Frankenstein's Monster, Dracula, or The Mummy, who all started their films in their monstrous forms, THE WOLF MAN's Larry Talbot was just an innocent man trying to rescue someone from an aerial attack, his curse brought about in the course of performing a noble deed. Chaney showed his acting chops as he struggled to overcome the killing instinct of the wolf inside of him and retain the compassion and empathy of his human form, providing a career-defining performance that would become the Chaney Jr. hallmark.





The Ghost of Frankenstein (1942)



Invisible Agent (1942)



The Mummy's Tomb (1942)



**Frankenstein Meets
the Wolf Man** (1943)





Phantom of the Opera (1943)

The inimitable Claude Rains is Erik in "The Phantom." Claude's This adaptation of Gaston Leroux's novel won Oscars for Cinematography and Art Direction, and was nominated for another two. Rains creates a wonderful balance between Erik's kind intentions and the Phantom's villainy. In lesser hands the character could easily become a two-dimensional caricature. But Rains finds the soul of The Phantom and turns in a brilliant performance, as do many of the supporting cast members.



Son of Dracula (1943)



The Invisible Man's Revenge (1944)



The Mummy's Ghost (1944)

The Climax (1944)



House of Frankenstein (1944)



The Mummy's Curse (1944)



House of Dracula (1945)



She-Wolf of London (1946)



The Brute Man (1946)

Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein (1948)

Seventeen years after Universal's Monster boom began, they decided to try a new approach: make films featuring their most successful comedic duo as they encounter classic monsters. For the first in what would become a fantastic series for Abbott and Costello, the studio held nothing back and brought out its three most popular monsters: Dracula (reprised by Bela Lugosi), The Wolf Man (reprised by Lon Chaney Jr.) and Frankenstein's Monster (Glenn Strange). The number rises to four if you count Vincent Price's voice-only cameo as The Invisible Man. It's a genuinely funny romp that does nothing to diminish the monsters or the actors who played them.



The Strange Door (1951)

An adaptation of a Robert Louis Stevenson story starring Dr. Moreau and Frankenstein's Monster. Charles Laughton and Boris Karloff come together to bring us one of Universal's lesser-known horror films. Whilst the film doesn't feature a monster of any supernatural origin, Laughton is at his deliciously mischievous best (a la *LOST SOULS*). And it never hurts to see Karloff as a lumbering beast in defiance of his master. Wonderful sets and beautiful atmosphere round out this little gem.

It Came From Outer Space (1953)

This film is notable for several reasons, among them being that this was Universal's first 3D film. It also featured a story and first draft screenplay by Ray Bradbury. The film centered around aliens bent on... destruction? No, just finding their way home. Leave it to Ray Bradbury to get away from the standard "alien invasion" plot and add some dimension and humanity to his alien creations.





Creature From the Black Lagoon (1954)



Revenge of the
Creature (1955)



This Island Earth (1955)

Most famous for its Millicent Patrick-designed alien, the Metaluna Mutant, THIS ISLAND EARTH stands on the threshold of Universal moving away from its classic B&W monster roots and venturing into color-drenched palates of more science-fiction oriented fare. The classic "brainium" design of the mutant (shared with other classic cinema aliens like The Saucer Men) has become a signature of the classic alien design, recently updated by Rick Baker for his work in MEN IN BLACK 3. THIS ISLAND EARTH stands as a true testament to storytelling and FX work, as the movie was a critical, popular, and technological success.



FEAR IN THE ATOMIC AGE IS UNIVERSAL!

BY JIM CIRRONELLA

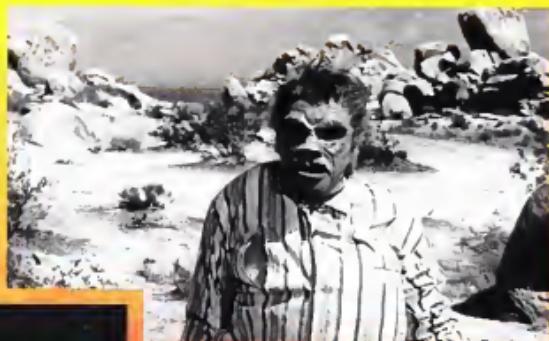
The post-war era of the 1950s ushered in a society hopeful for peace and prosperity. It was a period fueled by the promise of nuclear-powered vehicles and atomic power plants providing cheap and limitless energy to all, and science fiction films embraced these boundless possibilities, bringing a bold new world to life on the silver screen. As the heightened standard of special effects enabled an increasing number of fantastic tales to be told, science and the military were shown to prevail over every seemingly insurmountable menace which threatened to disrupt the American way of life—typically without acknowledging that a gross misuse of science had unleashed the menace in the first place.

Intermingled with this optimistic outlook, however, was a universal fear of the atomic age, a nervous suspicion that the bill had yet to be paid in full for all the technological advances born of the destructive weapons which had ended global conflict. The radioactive boogeyman was on the loose, and movie studios were just as apt to exploit these anxieties for box office dollars as

they were to further a rosy view of modern times. Of the motion pictures produced by Universal-International during the golden age of 1950s science fiction, there are several notable entries which vilify science as the root cause, depicting those in charge as oblivious to the deadly consequences of their experiments gone awry, and at times even rendering the scientists themselves as indistinguishable from their monstrous creations.

The first of Universal's sci-fi thrillers to broach the theme of technoscience-spawned nightmare was TARANTULA (1955). Set in the Arizona desert near the fictional town of Desert Rock, the story opens with a hideously deformed, pajama-clad man dying in the barren landscape. When the body is discovered and examined by local physician Matt Hastings (John Agar), the man is identified as Eric Jacobs, part of a scientific team conducting experiments in the secrecy of a remote desert laboratory. Jacob's research partner Professor Deemer (Leo G. Carroll) claims the body and confirms the cause of death as acromegalia, a rare disease which produces

Tarantula (1955)



abnormal growth in the face, chest, and extremities.

Unbeknownst to the authorities, Deemer and Jacobs have developed a synthetic nutrient in hopes of alleviating future food shortages due to overpopulation. While animals injected with the radioactive serum have grown to frighteningly large proportions, in humans, the nutrient only triggers a super-accelerated case of acromegaly. Deemer is later attacked in his lab by a dying research assistant, also horribly mutated by the experiment-borne disease. Knocking the professor unconscious, the assistant injects Deemer with the nutrient just before succumbing to his illness. The laboratory is accidentally set ablaze during the struggle, killing all of the test animals except for a steadily-growing tarantula, which escapes into the desert.

A young research student, Stephanie "Steve" Clayton (Mara Corday), arrives in Desert Rock to assist the scientists, while a rash of mysterious deaths begins to plague the area, first affecting cattle, then horses, and eventually humans. As Hastings begins piecing the puzzle together, the giant tarantula continues to stalk the desert terrain, unseen by everyone except its victims. By the time it is discovered, the spider is roughly the size of a four-story building; it attacks Deemer's home and devours the now-maimed scientist before heading towards Desert Rock. In the nick of time, the military arrives to napalm the monstrosity from the air.

TARANTULA was Universal's initial foray into the giant mutant bug boom. When THEM! (1954) proved to be a success for Warner

Bros., Jack Arnold was assigned to direct a similarly-styled film for Universal, albeit with less of a budget and tighter schedule than his previous genre outings. A self-proclaimed sci-fi buff, Arnold was required as a contract director to tackle the project handed to him or risk being suspended. He based the story on an earlier television episode of SCIENCE FICTION THEATER, "No Food For Thought," which he'd directed and was penned by TARANTULA screenwriter Robert M. Fresco, featuring the nearly identical scenario of scientists working to develop a synthetic nutrient in the seclusion of a desert lab. In further developing this cautionary tale into TARANTULA, fear was the primary factor for inclusion of the film's arachnid antagonist. ("Tarantulas won't hurt you," Arnold states in the 1988 biographical tome, DIRECTED BY JACK ARNOLD. "But I knew a lot of people were afraid of them. That's where I got the idea for TARANTULA—and I shot it in ten days!")

The giant spider, black and virtually featureless as it blots out the familiar southwestern scenery, perfectly embodies atomic era apprehensions of nature striking back at unrestrained scientific hubris. In typical Jack Arnold style, the extraordinary is set upon the commonplace, and the film's most striking imagery to convey this was realized through effects pioneer Clifford Stine's expert miniature photography of a real tarantula (thankfully, the less-than-convincing prop spider on display in publicity materials was barely utilized). And yet, despite its frightful appearance, the actual monster is simply a primitive animal operating on instinct,



The Incredible Shrinking Man (1957)



possessing no more malevolence than a rampaging tornado. Instead, it's the scientists in TARANTULA, wielding their advanced learning like infants playing with fire, who are the film's true villains. Despite their intentions, they are portrayed as reckless and ineffectual, their efforts culminating only in a grotesque magnification of nature that is beyond the scope of their understanding to explain or control. In the end, science is ill-equipped to rectify the horror it has unleashed, instead requiring the military to eradicate the problem through an even greater display of devastating power.

Arnold's follow-up excursion into science fiction, THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN (1957), is widely considered to be his genre masterpiece and remains today as the quintessential atomic age thriller. The original novel, THE SHRINKING MAN, and subsequent screenplay written by Richard Matheson tell the strange story of Robert Scott Carey, the archetypal 1950s family man with a wife, child (book version only) and idyllic suburban home who, while vacationing on a pleasure boat, is exposed to a radioactive cloud adrift on the open sea. A subsequent dousing with insecticide causes Carey (Grant Williams) to begin shrinking in size. Inch by inch, he becomes progressively isolated from his family, friends and society. With science slow to explain and ultimately at a loss to cure his affliction, Carey is just a few inches tall when he's attacked by the family cat and becomes trapped in the cellar of his home. Abruptly torn from the modern world and left to fend for himself in a hostile environment, he survives a flood and battles a house spider for dominion over the basement. His victory against the nightmarish adversary serves as an epiphany where Carey comes to accept his ever-diminishing state, and looks forward to new experiences in unseen microscopic realms.

Unlike Matheson's story, in which Carey's struggle is told in flashback, the motion picture version unfolds in linear fashion so that its far-fetched premise could be more easily sold to 1950s audiences. Nevertheless, the film covers much of the same introspective thematic ground, which was not common in a medium that at the time favored monsters and special effects over subtext. Literally losing one's standing and importance in society due to a random aberration of technology would have been a particularly disturbing premise given the era's conformist mindset, and it's to Arnold's credit that he was able to present this concept minus the typical happy ending. Equally impressive is that, rather than building upon the fear of nature being made monstrous by man, the film shows man becoming minute to the point where the natural world becomes threatening, with science unable to reverse the process it has set in motion (in the novel, the scientists are almost non-existent). As in TARANTULA, the spider represents man's fears aggregated into a single horrifying foe, except in this case a usually harmless, normal-sized spider is shown as a ruthless monster when seen through the eyes of its diminutive human prey.

Also prevalent is the portrayal of common domestic tropes as one's prison. Unable to function in normal society, Carey is initially trapped in his home, then confined within a dollhouse imitation of his home, and finally exiled to the empty, concrete world of the cellar. The wire grating over an open window symbolizes the bars of his imprisonment,

and only when Carey becomes small enough to pass through the grating is he truly set free. This idea is convincingly depicted through Arnold's keen attention to detail and atmosphere, which is common in his films as he explained in FANGORIA magazine (Issue No. 3, 1979): "You have to create an atmosphere in which (the audience's) credibility will be suspended to the point where they don't say, 'That's impossible.' And I think the only way you can get an audience to accept the impossible is to get them involved in a mood."

The final Universal/Arnold team-up to tackle atomic era trepidation was 1958's *MONSTER ON THE CAMPUS*, a threadbare B-picture programmer which begins as university professor Donald Blake (Arthur Franz) receives delivery of a coelacanth, a prehistoric fish that has resisted evolution for millions of years. Unknown to Blake, the specimen was treated with gamma rays to preserve its tissue, inadvertently causing any living organism coming in contact with its blood to revert to a primitive version of itself. A ordinary dog that laps up contaminated water dripping from the fossil's crate regresses into a saber-toothed wolf; a dragonfly sucking the fish's blood grows into its two-foot long prehistoric ancestor; and when Blake accidentally cuts his hand on the coelacanth's teeth, he too becomes a primordial ape-man. Once the phenomenon wears off, the professor has no recollection of the transformation; meanwhile, the body count continues to climb as detectives search campus grounds for a subhuman killer possessing oversized hands and feet. Blake eventually comes to suspect his own beastly alter-ego, and in regret for having committed murder, allows the police to shoot him dead.

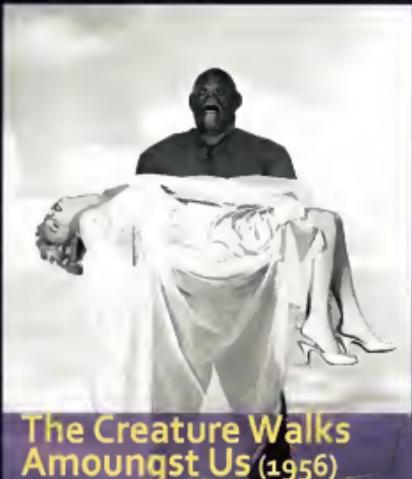
Once again, radiation is the unseen culprit at the center of the mayhem. According to Blake, preserving specimens with gamma rays is "the latest thing"—a view he expresses with all the enthusiasm of a giddy teenager while blatantly disregarding the latent dangers of mishandling radioactive material. Blake is such a distracted, bumbling scientist that he twice becomes an unwilling guinea pig simply because of sloppy lab procedure, and not due to any dubious experimentation on his part.

Produced during a period when lavish sci-fi films were in decline, *MONSTER ON THE CAMPUS* is a relatively cheap effort by Universal to cash-in on the success of the "teenage monster" craze enjoyed by independent studios in the late fifties. Despite budgetary and scripting limitations, Arnold manages to create a suspenseful drama, though the cut-rate monster makeup and scattered effects shots used to highlight the climactic transformation do very little to distinguish this nuclear-age *JEKYLL AND HYDE* retread among his better-known genre films.

While controversy exists among film historians as to the extent of Jack Arnold's influence over his directorial efforts for Universal, he is nevertheless the common denominator among those genre films known for a subtextual narrative typically absent from 1950s sci-fi cinema, and he was able to convey this at a time when the political climate discouraged it. "If there were important things to be said about our society and its mores, they certainly weren't being said in the film fare at the time," he recalls in *DIRECTED BY JACK ARNOLD*. "That was the kind of thing I wanted to express, and we could get away with it because it was fantasy." 

Monster on Campus (1958)





1970s





Flash Gordon (1980)



American Werewolf in London (1981)



Conan the Barbarian (1982)

When the dream team of director John Milius, production designer Ron Cobb (fresh off of *ALIEN*), and composer Basil Poledouris decided to adapt Robert E. Howard's seminal work, the choice of who would play the namesake lead was anything but obvious. From Stallone and Bronson to William Smith, many were considered. In the end, bodybuilding champion and bit-part actor Arnold Schwarzenegger was chosen. The film features a wonderful fantasy setting with loads of matte paintings and practical effects, including Nick Alder's almost forty-foot long mechanical snake.

ET (1982)

With his *CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND*, Steven Spielberg played on the idea that not all aliens come to earth to kill and conquer. And while the alien itself wasn't the star of the film, the innocent nature of the whole experience was very apparent. But with *E.T.*, Spielberg put the alien front and center, making him an endearing, oversized plush toy. The relationship between *E.T.* and the young boy Elliott is so genuinely touching and realistic that audiences completely forgot they were watching an animatronic puppet.

The Thing (1982)



THE THING ABOUT THE THING

JOHN CARPENTER'S SCIENCE FICTION REVOLUTION

BY ALEXANDRA WEST

“Questionable” seems to be the most polite term one could use when describing audience’s reactions to John Carpenter’s 1982 science fiction opus, *THE THING*. The small audience that found the movie upon its initial release was wary of it; it was neither Ridley Scott’s haunted house in space epic *ALIEN*, nor was it Spielberg’s family-friendly *E.T.* *THE THING* was its own beast with a bold vision that would only come to find its audience on late night TV and VHS releases.

THE THING is a near-perfect cinematic crystallization of its time. Perhaps this is why it, like other great works of art, could not be appreciated in its own time. *THE THING* went from outright box office dud to one of the most revered science fiction horror movies ever made. The fear and tangible paranoia that Carpenter created by forcing his cast into tight, isolated spaces, married with some of the most fantastic practical effects ever seen on screen and Ennio Morricone’s bunting and unique score, created a one of a kind film that would eventually be copied but never bettered.

Writer Peter Watt, whose short story “The Things” is based around the events of the novella and film but told from the point of view of the alien being, describes his attraction to John Carpenter’s movie thus: “I think it’s a better film than *ALIEN*. If only because none of the characters act like idiots. Nobody goes off looking for the ship’s cat all by themselves even though there’s a monster on the loose. The moment they realize what they’re up against they take steps: figure out a serological detection method, start eating exclusively out of cans, make as sure as they can that nobody has a chance to slip away unnoticed. And the monster’s no slouch, either; it’s always two steps ahead, sabotaging the blood supply, planting false evidence, using the perfectly reasonable we-can’t-let-this-thing-get-out rationale to justify destroying the humans’ only means of escape or contact with the outside world. It’s not a bug hunt; it’s a chess game, and even at the very end, you’re never sure who won. People tend to focus on the splatter and grotesque FX, but buried in all the flames and gore is one of the most straight-out intelligent genre movies I’ve ever seen.”

THE THING’s life began as the short story “Who Goes There?” by John W. Campbell, Jr. (written under the pen name Don A. Stuart), which was initially turned into a film by Howard Hawks. *THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD* placed emphasis on a humanoid invader that could create an army of invaders using pods he contained in his body. Carpenter, while a fan of Hawks, made *THE THING* as an adaptation of the original novella rather than a simple remake of the 1951 film. The violent and gory rampage that was subsequently unleashed was almost unheard of. It was a studio film with Grindhouse undertones. Rob King, a film professor at the University of Toronto, explains *THE THING*’s continued appeal: “*THE THING* has a lot of things going for it,” he laughs. “Carpenter, obviously, but also Kurt Russell as a movie star has his own cult cache, which you can see in the way Quentin Tarantino used him in *DEATH PROOF*. There are multiple access points: it has the horror, it has the campiness of having Wilford Brimley. All

of these have helped fuel its cult status.”

Part of the genius of *THE THING* are its central characters and conceits that make the film part gory monster movie and part character-driven mystery. *THE THING* appeals to many genre fans because of its flexibility in storytelling. The gore does not override the story, just as the plot doesn’t interfere with the practical effects. The two meld into one, creating a film that challenges our expectations while remaining entertaining. “What you can see,” continues Rob King, “is a vein of horror that has significant cult appeal moving into the mainstream and offering the same kind of thrills. It doesn’t seem to have been toned down. It’s still shockingly violent and horrifying, and yet it’s a big budget film. If you think about Jean-Luc Godard’s early, smaller films like *BREATHLESS*, and then look at *CONTEMPT* which has a budget and is still a good art film, that’s part of what you’re seeing with *THE THING*—that it’s showing the possibilities of what could have been mainstream. This could have been a template for big budget filmmaking that doesn’t pander, that doesn’t tone things down.”

Though initially Universal Studios was happily assuming *THE THING* would be a surefire hit after the success of *ALIEN*, the box office was not as promising as they had hoped. After three weeks in cinemas with dwindling box office receipts in direct opposition to summer fan fare, *THE THING* was dropped from theaters. In retrospect, *THE THING* was a visionary film ahead of its time that would come to change the genre itself. “The thing that’s interesting about John Carpenter,” explains Professor Charlie Keil, director of the Cinema Studies department at the University of Toronto, “is that he’s established his identity primarily in three genres: the action film, the science fiction film, and the horror film. What that means is that you can’t understand him as a director in terms of simply one genre; you have to see the way the other genres fuse or inform his efforts in those other genres. In the case of *THE THING*, I think that the action sensibility is important, because it’s almost like an anti-action film. They’re in such close quarters; there’s so little capacity for anything to happen that it tests a director whose sensibility moves towards action to really figure out the dynamics at hand.”

One of the most important factors in *THE THING*’s longevity is the cult of Carpenter. Like *THE SHINING* and *BLADE RUNNER*, which also faced indifference from audiences and malice from critics, the film was revisited by the home audience, curious about the supposed flop because of the previous successes of the visionary director.

THE THING shows its audience their greatest fear: that the monster may be ourselves, that we have been invaded and possibly defeated without even knowing it. The claustrophobia and suspicion reveals our human follies and, in doing so, bravely indicts us all.

Opposite Page: “Who Goes There?” acrylics on board, illustration © 2004 Bob Eggleton

Original painting for the cover to “A New Dawn”, by The New England Science Fiction Association Press the collected stories of Don A. Stuart, AKA John W. Campbell—who wrote the original short story “Who Goes There?” (which this illustrates) in the 1940’s and optioned for the film *THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD* by RKO in 1951. In this short story, the creature is vaguely described as “dog-like” and having three red eyes, and a mass of tentacles around its head and it absorbs other life forms. You can see where John Carpenter’s 1982 version got some of its basic ideas by going back to the story. The book is available as hardcover from NESFA Press (www.nesfa.org/press/)

THE THING

IMITATIONS IN ICE

JOHN CARPENTER ON THE TRIUMPHS AND TRAGEDIES OF HIS MASTERPIECE

BY JUSTIN BEAHM

"I didn't want to get in there and f--- it up," admits John Carpenter of his 1982 creature-walks-among-us, genre-redefining sci-fi opus, *THE THING*. "I wasn't sure I wanted to do it, but it would be my first movie for a major studio, so I set my concerns aside and decided to make my own version." Carpenter's riff on one of his favorite films would simultaneously prove to be his greatest opportunity and his greatest challenge, with a gauntlet production and harsh critical and audience response upon release. Only now, three decades later, has the importance of this seminal cinematic achievement finally started to sink in, and there has never been a better time to tell the tale of *THE THING*.

Howard Hawks' *THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD* (1951) not only stands as one of the all time science fiction classics, but was the pivotal moment for fantasy-obsessed Kentucky kid Carpenter. "There are so many things about that film that are groundbreaking," the filmmaker shares. "Plus, it may be the greatest example of a Howard Hawks movie, with the group interaction and overlapping dialogue."

Itself an adaptation of author John W. Campbell's 1938 short story "Who Goes There?", *THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD* tells the story of a group of scientists in the Arctic who come across a downed spacecraft, take its frozen inhabitant back to their base, and then deal with the consequences when their visitor thaws and goes on the hunt for blood. Carpenter, just two years old when the film was released, experienced it on a revival run years later, and the impact was undeniable. "It is just amazing," he smiles. "I sat in awe at the burn scene when the monster comes through the door, silhouetted from behind, where they set him on fire. Unforgettable."

THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD, and other films of its ilk, were the genesis of Carpenter's own eventual exploration of cinema creation, inspiring him to roll out his first home movie, *REVENGE OF THE COLOSSAL BEASTS*, when he was just 14 years old. As a monster kid raised on EC comics and Saturday afternoon matinees, it is no surprise that a common theme kept creeping up in his proceeding early efforts *TERROR FROM SPACE* (1963), *WARRIOR AND THE DEMON* (1969), and *SORCERER FROM OUTER SPACE* (1969).

Step forward eleven years and Carpenter has graduated from the University of Southern California and commanded the public interest with indie efforts like *ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13* (1976), *HALLOWEEN* (1978), and *THE FOG* (1980). With momentum at his back and *ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK* wrapped

and headed to theaters in 1981, opportunity came knocking. "One of my friends from film school, producer Stewart Cohen, came to me and asked if I would like to get involved with making *THE THING* with Universal," Carpenter shares. "By that point I had made a couple of films, and it was a deal where they courted me, which was exciting."

That excitement was tempered with concern that he was getting too close for comfort with one of his all time favorites. "I didn't want to touch the original." In walked writer Bill Lancaster (*THE BAD NEWS BEARS*), the element that would push Carpenter from concerned to confident and help carry the project from idea to realization. "I wanted to see what Bill could do with the blood test scene, which I thought was the most important in the movie. Once I saw what he came up with, I was sure we could do something special." Carpenter signed a three-picture deal with the studio, and production was put into motion.

The writing process involved bringing the story into the modern era, something both director and screenwriter were intent on. It wasn't just the characterizations and computer games that needed updating, though. To Carpenter, who had been a part to the Vietnam protests and student activism while studying at USC, "It was a completely different mood in this country

than when the original was made. *THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD* was a film that showed a lot of pride in the military, and was a triumphal story for the human race. I started thinking of the premise of the original story—



considering a creature that could imitate anything. There was no way we could defeat this. It would have to be the end of the world. So I went with that."

The casting process started with Carpenter approaching veteran actor Jack Thompson for the lead role of R.J. MacReady, but the production was turned down flat when the Australian read the script. Immediately thereafter, a familiar name was suggested by first assistant director Larry Franco. "I had been working with Larry since *THE FOG*," recalls Carpenter. "He is the best A.D. in the business, and we get along really well, so I'd listen when he had something to say. He mentioned his brother-in-law, Kurt Russell, for MacReady, and believe it or not, I wasn't sure, at first. Kurt read the script and came to me about getting involved. After we did *ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK* together, we started working on *THE THING*, and the studio wanted him for the part. We did a bunch of rehearsals, which I think was unusual for Kurt because he hadn't done much of that, and it worked."

One of the most memorable performances and on-screen transformations comes from Wilford Brimley, the *WALTONS* television star and relative newcomer to film, in the role of Dr. Blair Brimley, who would soon thereafter become a household name with his starring role in *OUR HOUSE*, was unlike any actor Carpenter had worked with up until that point. "I didn't envision him in that role. He was brought up, and I had seen some of his work, but not a lot, so I went and had Sydney Pollack show me a scene with Brimley, and he was just great. Great with dialogue. He's always Brimley, you can't get around that. I didn't realize



at the time that Will can't read. He learns his lines by having someone read them to him. He's a real cowboy—the real deal."

Richard Dreyfuss, Dr. Copper in the film, arrived with a unique concept for what his character was all about. "I let the cast come up with who they were, and their motivation," the director shares. "Richard was the most interesting



R.J. MacReady prepares for battle with The Thing. Or, The Thing prepares to do battle with the other humans. Guess we'll never know.



of all. He said, 'I'm really a Russian spy, reporting to the Russians about what is going on,' which had nothing to do with the story. I think he just came up with it to show off."

One of the since-lost cast members was Charles Hallanan, who played Norris. Carpenter recalls that the actor, who passed away from a heart attack in 1997, was having problems even back when production began. "We were in British Columbia shooting some exteriors as they come up to the spaceship, and he was completely out of breath. We had to loop those lines. He was constantly laboring. The effects of his heart problem were showing signs even then."

Out of the entire cast, the actor who perhaps most impressed the director was Jed, the four-legged survivor of the helicopter hunt and chase at the start of the film that mutates into the first on-screen monster. "Jed was part wolf," so we had to be careful with him. Whenever we'd shoot with him, it would be a minimal crew. When he'd come in, we'd have to get to know him all over again, letting him sniff us. We couldn't put our arms around him or anything. He was part wild animal."

One sequence in particular forever cemented Jed as the consummate professional in Carpenter's mind. "He had such incredible intelligence. There is a dolly shot down a hallway when the dog comes up and looks in one room and walks to another room, and we move with him. He never looked in the camera. He was absolutely riveted by whatever he was supposed to be looking at. Astonishing. He was a special movie star."

After bringing frequent collaborator Dean Cundey on board as cinematographer, attention turned to the most important

Faces only a mother could love: Some of the various forms of Rob Bottin's monstrous shape-shifting, FX genius.

off-screen star of the film: the special effects creator. Rob Bottin (THE FOG) had worked with Carpenter before, but this time things would be very different. This time he had the run of the playground, and his director was happy to let him explore... to an extent. "He is a complicated person, and a genius in certain ways," Carpenter smiles. "He loved and embraced what he did and what we were doing. We started talking, and he would come back with models and drawings. Some things were added in and taken out, and some of it was on the fly as we were going. He was obsessed with Big Daddy Roth's drawings and big heads. He wanted to do some Roth-style stuff, and I didn't think it would work."

Of James Arness' creature in the original film, Carpenter confesses, "I think it was a little disappointing in its look, but still great. Nothing had been done like it before. There was character makeup, like in FRANKENSTEIN and WOLF MAN, or a guy in a monster suit running around, but we wanted to go a completely different direction. It was Rob who was big on it looking like anything, and I started thinking about it. Anything it has ever imitated it can present itself as, which is why there are so many looks to it. He was just inventing ideas, and we had a staff of artists coming up with concepts. It was something else."

While ideas were flying fast and furious in the beginning of the production, Bottin eventually had to admit he had promised a bit much for what time was allowing him to produce. Remembers Carpenter, "His ambition was huge at the beginning, but at some point he realized he couldn't deliver all he had planned. He got Randy Cook to animate some stuff, got Stan Winston to do some of the dogs. He was in a little over his head."

Production designer John Lloyd found what ended up to be at once the most ideal and harshest location imaginable for the story's Arctic research facility in Stewart, British Columbia. The town is a remote, icy harbor known as much for its whitewash storms as its bar fights, all of which contributed to a sometimes frightening experience for all involved. Carpenter reminiscences, "Lloyd went scouting and found this glacier that we could build a set on that looked into a mountain in the background. They would let us blow it up and all this stuff. It was up this mining road, just a treacherous place. Stewart is right next to Hider, Alaska. One of the most lawless areas in British Columbia. Scary."

While actors, producers, and the director were put up in a hotel, the crew was housed in a barge docked in the harbor. Every morning, there were several buses that made their way up the road with the cast and crew inside. Carpenter remembers that just getting to set was often the most dangerous adventure of the day. "There were alarms at the top when trucks would be going down, and they would come roaring down the road, and the buses would have to pull off to the side and get out of their way. It was a rough location."

Carpenter, famous for not enjoying working with burn stunts, had to deal with flame a number of times throughout the shoot, and not every incident was planned. "It was not fun to do the fire. Tony Cecere was the stunt guy doing the burn, and the first time he didn't burn enough, so we had to do it again. I was terrified. He did it both on set at Universal City and at the exterior in British Columbia, coming out of the wall on fire." While the stunts were coordinated well in advance, the most perilous hot moment came at the hands of an unsuspecting Bottin while setting up the Norris chest-burst scene. "The chemicals and plastic and glue all started to fill the air, and when we introduced a flame bar to things, it blew

up," Carpenter relates. "It didn't hurt anyone, but it was alarming as hell."

After shooting in British Columbia, the production moved to the much warmer environs of Los Angeles, inhabiting sound stages at Universal Studios. The initial concept, to follow in the footsteps of the original THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD and shoot in actual freezer sets, was scrapped almost as fast as the idea was hatched. Explains Carpenter, "Some of the original THING was shot in an ice house in North Dakota. I took one step inside one of those and ran out. Oh my God, that is cold. There was no way we could work in it, so John Lloyd came up with the idea to cool a standard stage at Universal City. It didn't really get down to freezing, and was tolerable if you wore a jacket. With a little coffee, you could see your breath."

With the shooting wrapped, production moved into post, normally where composer Carpenter would start laying down the score. Not so this time: "Universal never asked me to do it. Plus, I figured when we could hire Ennio Morricone, one of the greatest of all time, what would they need with me? But in the end, it wasn't as thoroughly done as I would like. I would score something from the first frame to the last, but because of the nature of the production, that couldn't be done, so we had to adapt."

Despite his bow to the iconic Italian composer for the bulk of the music, the director did get to add some of his signature synth work to the proceedings. "I did sneak off and do a couple bridging parts."

Nobody could have forecasted that the summer of 1982 would see one of the most incredible genre schedules in cinema history, especially not Universal, who were banking on THE THING as their flagship second quarter release. When the film landed in theaters on June 25th, it not only opened against Ridley Scott's BLADE RUNNER, but faced stiff competition in E.T., STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KAHN, POLTERGEIST, and CONAN THE BARBARIAN.

With a first weekend take of just over 3 million on a 15 million budget, red flags started to go up with the studio, and while some critics slogged the picture, what hurt the most for Carpenter was the fan backlash. "Pain is all I can say to describe it. There were some good reviews, but the fans hated it. They thought I had raped the Madonna. I had desecrated the purity of the original movie. How dare I?"

John's phone rang. It was Universal, and unlike months before where they greeted him with enthusiasm and expectation, this time the conversation would be very different. "It didn't make enough money, and they weren't happy. I was let go from what was to be my next project, FIRESTARTER, and the rest of my contract. I thought I had made a great film," laments Carpenter. "Even in the face of all of this, I thought I had made something. What could I do when everybody was telling me I was drunk? I just kept my head down. I finally got another gig making CHRISTINE, so it worked out alright. If the movie had been appreciated and made a lot of money, my career would have been different. I would have had different chances. At the time, I was trying to make it in the business, which is rough. It was my time to take crap, and that's okay."

As a final statement on where his icy adventure eventually led, the filmmaker smiles. "History has been good to the film, and I am very happy with how everything has worked out since." 

The Dark Crystal: Jim Henson's Bright Idea

BY Lianne SPIDERBABY

In preparation for this article, I rented THE DARK CRYSTAL (1982, Jim Henson and Frank Oz), purchased one giant bag of gummy bears and one bag of extra buttery popcorn, grabbed my Alf sleeping bag from

the late 80s, and sat down

in front of the television.

All of a sudden—within three minutes—I was transported back into my glorious childhood. The score from THE DARK CRYSTAL will lead you there first, followed by a first glimpse of the title, 'A Jim Henson Film', and a shot of the Skeksis' castle. Then the narration: "Another world... another time...."

This is the kind of magic Jim Henson was able to conceive and manipulate. Perhaps you more recently experienced it with the return of THE MUPPETS in theaters this past year. Henson and his glorious puppets and puppeteers had the ability to make us believe in a reality beyond our world, and at the tender age of 8, I was willing to follow Henson just about anywhere. We all were. Although THE DARK CRYSTAL was darker than most films employing puppets, the aura and vivacity of imagination and sparkle is prominent. It gets underneath your skin and penetrates your heart.

THE DARK CRYSTAL tells a story that took place one thousand years ago, when the magic crystal cracked and two races appeared: the wise and gentle Mystics and the cruel Skeksis. Since that time, the world plunged into ruin and war, as the Skeksis pillaged the land for their own benefit, killing off a race of Gelflings (except for

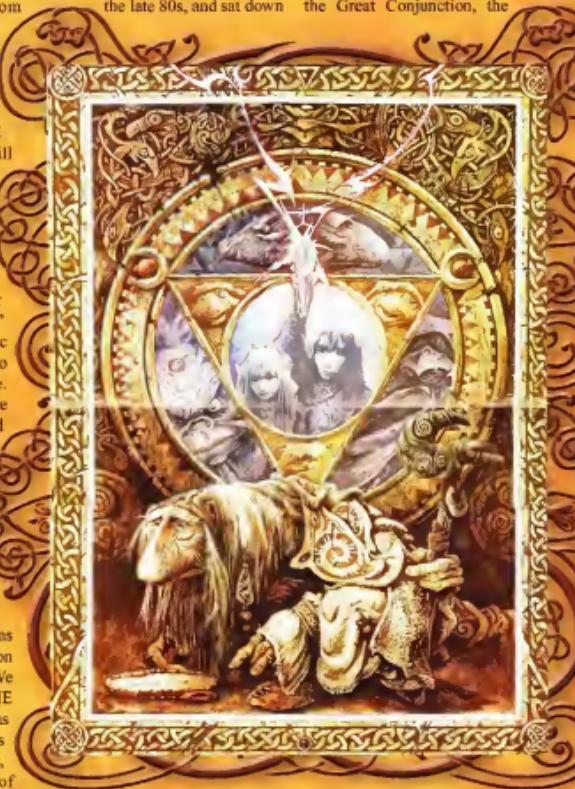
two, Jen and Kira). After a millennium, the triple suns of the world started their journey to come together in the Great Conjunction, explained to Gelfling Jen by Aughra, Keeper of Secrets. During the Great Conjunction, the

Skeksis can harness their immortality, and lock the planet into a twisted empire that can never be renewed. It is up to Jen the Gelfling to stop this from happening.

As spectators, we are immersed in a completely wonderful, yet dark and atmospheric world. There are no humans here, just creatures and unfamiliar plants and life forms that are completely unrecognizable. Everything is illuminated with color and a glowing vibrancy.

The world in THE DARK CRYSTAL invites children and adults alike with welcoming arms; the Mystics are comforting beasts that instantly gain your trust and love (the Mystics and Falcor from THE NEVERENDING STORY were my favorite characters as a child), while the Skeksis are sinister and terrifying.

Yet THE DARK CRYSTAL is much more complex in theme than just good vs. evil. The film is deeply environmentally, and socially conscious. For example, the Skeksis drain the world of many of its natural resources. The Skeksis also create an imbalance, threatening every species they encounter. The film's



environment and setting takes center stage and demonstrates that even in a fantasy world, each creature is part of an ecosystem that can be easily ruined and/or torn apart if abused or overused by a particular species.

THE DARK CRYSTAL is also about genocide; the Gelflings have been slaughtered and killed off by the Skeksis because of a prophecy that states that one Gelfling will restore the Crystal. The Skeksis also use weaker creatures as their slaves, demonstrating a sense of caste system, the stronger dominating the weaker for their own benefit. In one particularly upsetting scene, the Garthim come to collect several podlings from the village to take back to the Skeksis to use as slaves. The Skeksis steal the podlings' "essence" and sense of self.

This beautiful and wonderful film would not be possible without the masterful vision and passion of writer, director, and puppeteer Jim Henson (1936-1990). Henson shaped our childhood with TV shows like THE MUPPET SHOW, FRAGGLE ROCK, and SESAME STREET and films like THE GREAT MUPPET CAPER and LABYRINTH. Henson never dreamed he would make such a successful career out of puppeteering, and more importantly, he was able to achieve extraordinary success while simultaneously retelling his passion for the environment and worldly social issues. Henson's last public television interview was on the Arsenio Hall show on May 4, 1990. Kermit also appeared on the show, making it exceptionally memorable. Although Henson spent most of his time behind the camera operating his puppets, Henson had an unforgettable and loveable disposition on camera; his voice, like Kermit's, is soft and serene. There are few things that evoke such a collective feeling of warmth and wit as the work of Henson.

FM had the great pleasure of speaking with another great puppeteer, Simon Williamson, who brought to life the character of UrSol The Mystic as well as a Garthim in THE DARK CRYSTAL.

FM. THE DARK CRYSTAL is such an amazing film: it was my favorite movie growing up, and now as an adult, I really appreciate the work that goes into a film like that, especially the work of puppeteers like yourself. Preparing for this role of bringing UrSol The Mystic Chantor to life, what was involved?

Simon Williamson. It was unusual; because of the physical nature of the film, we had special contracts that we agreed to through the union for two phases of pre-production. During the first period, four of us worked in tandem with the creature and puppet designers, working out what we could do physically to bring the creatures and characters to life, and what we could do with regard to the designing of the costumes, the mechanics underneath. It was very creative. Then there was all of the physical training, which for the Mystics was quite extensive. The thing about the Mystics was that they were bent over at all times. You walked along in a crouch, trying to keep your feet flat-footed rather than bending at the toes. The design on the Mystic feet were very much like clown shoes, longer and bigger than your own feet. The movements there



had to be very deliberate. All done crouched over. It was difficult to keep it up, so we all had to go on a special diet that was designed to avoid any circulation or exhaustion problems.

While in this crouched over position, we had to give a good performance as well, and in some cases, I dreaded the long takes. It was also difficult to get out of the costume, so we had little stools that we could rest on in between takes. Generally we shot similar sequences together, so we would stay in costume for up to twelve hours.

FM. What was working with Jim Henson like, and how did he organize and run things on the set and in rehearsal?

SW. Most of the work on pre-production that I did was with Jean-Pierre Amiel, who was the choreographer and mime trainer, and he also played a Mystic himself. Jim would pop in to these rehearsals and encourage us. Once we were on the set, Jim ran the set in a very calm manner; he really knew what he was doing. And of course, half the time he was puppeteering himself as well. It was helpful in this case to have a second director, Frank Oz, working on the film.

During pre-production, Jim would hold Friday evening puppeteering workshops with eight or so people, myself included, who were doing the Mystics and the Garthim characters. There were also the Skeksis and a few minor puppet characters, wood lawn creatures and the sort. So these workshops would help us learn some hand-puppeteering for those minor characters. Occasionally, the costume designers would come to the workshops as well so that they could learn how to motion some of the smaller puppets. Jim was particularly good at that—we were getting a master class with the great Jim Henson every Friday.

FM. How did you meet Jim?

SW. I came to London from Cardiff, and I had a background in tumbling, karate, and mime. I was looking for physical puppet work. I saw an advertisement in the newspaper called 'Stage'

and it was the Henson Organization looking for mimes, dancers, puppeteers, etc. There was a short description for THE DARK CRYSTAL, and so I sent off my resume and was called in for a workshop audition. To my surprise, I saw Amiel there. I had done some work with him six months before, so I knew how he worked. I got through that audition, and I was called back. There were three auditions in total.

The script was very basic in many ways because my character was movement based. Things were described broadly, and I had to develop the Mystic behavior.

FM. DARK CRYSTAL is so different from other puppet films; it's very serious; it has dark undertones; there are some parts that are scary and haunting, and yet it's all very beautiful. It's a wonderful story and it almost has an arthouse feel. At the time, did you believe it was going to be something extraordinary?

SW. I knew that the nature of this film was quite groundbreaking. The cast was entirely puppet, it was one of a kind. You could see all the resources that Jim Henson had, most of the time on films when people talking about "The Making Of". There was definitely money in this film, and it was very organized. Jim had paid his dues with The Muppets, so we knew that this film was going to be quite something. Of course, we didn't know how well it was going to be received. We could tell right from the beginning, especially with the Mystics, that this film had a different tone than THE MUPPETS.

I also got to puppeteer a Garthim, which was easier than the Mystics, because we got to smash around and I didn't have to crouch. I learned quite a bit on the set; for example, one of the mimes, Robbie Barnett, was a stilt walker and had experience working in the circus. He taught us how to walk on stilts! We extended that walking on stilts to walking on four stilts. This was for the Landstrider puppets. It was really incredible. In the end, only two adult Landstriders were needed, so I didn't have to walk on stilts on camera.



FM. They don't make movies like **THE DARK CRYSTAL** anymore; it seems as though it's all been replaced by animation and CGI, which is a terrible shame. Why do you think this has occurred, and do you think the magic of puppets and puppeteering is beginning to return (*War Horse*, the newest Muppet movie, etc.)?

SW. I don't think we'll ever go back to puppet-driven movies; the physical aspect of puppets just isn't done as much today. It can all be done with computers, even though that can be sometimes more costly. It's easier to control after the shoot, though, in post-production. Shooting is so expensive, so you have to get it right on the set, whereas with a computer, it can be tinkered with after. I think also, digital manipulation of footage can also give you things that maybe we can't do with puppeteering, even the most skilled of puppeteers.

Technology is ingrained in how film works. The Muppets have a fun base, and that will always be the case, but I think the heart of Hollywood now is very much technology-ingrained. I don't think computer generated characters can give you the same emotional quality. The puppets hold space, and we're able to feel more attached to them. However, when I saw Peter Jackson's **KING KONG** film, there were moments when I really felt emotional, despite the computer technological aspect. Of course, **KING KONG** was half CGI and half puppeteering; it was a marriage between the two.

FM. Do you recall a particular moment on set or scene in the film or a memory from **THE DARK CRYSTAL** that really resonates as special and/or dear to your heart?

SW. The thing that always amuses me from my time as a Mystic in the first week during rehearsals was, during the break, I was squatting on a very low stool and my dresser came in to chat with me while I was in costume. She was asking me a question, and I just couldn't hear her. I asked her to speak up, and I still couldn't make out what she was saying. She was talking to my hand, because my head and ears were in the back of the neck of the

Mystic, and she had gone around to the front of the costume! It just goes to show that if you do puppeteering well, you can convince people that your body is the costume.

There was something that Frank Oz did on set that was quite extraordinary. He blew me away. One of his Skeksis, Chamberlain, is stripped of his clothing and his power. You see all the other Skeksis come in and torture him. Chamberlain is left against the wall, completely distressed and panting. Frank Oz did this panting movement and it was absolutely amazing; it was so hard to believe that it was only a puppet. I watched Frank doing this, making Chamberlain pant, eyes rolling into the back of his head, and I remember getting goosebumps, and thinking to myself, "Wow, this is superlative puppeteering." It was just uncanny; I had to remind myself that it was Frank moving the puppet.

FM. **THE DARK CRYSTAL** created a lot of opportunities for you as well, in the future...

SW. Yes, it did. If not for **THE DARK CRYSTAL**, I wouldn't have done **RETURN OF THE JEDI**. I also did **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS** and **THE MUPPET CHRISTMAS CAROL**. I was asked to do the stage play of **LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS**, but after learning how physically strenuous it could be on the film set, and how some of the takes were so difficult, I wasn't interested. Being on stage with no breaks for two hours, night after night!

Gaining some first hand insight into **THE DARK CRYSTAL** and how Jim Henson worked made me feel that childhood spark all over again. There are few films made today that inspire that same feeling of magic within me, and perhaps that's because I'm all grown up—but watching **THE DARK CRYSTAL** again brought it back for me, and who knows, maybe "someday we'll find it, the rainbow connection; the lovers, the dreamers, and me". 



Simon Williamson
and the fantastical
creations he
brought to life.

Firestarter (1984)



The Last Starfighter (1984)



Dune (1984)

Back to the Future (1985)

When Robert Zemeckis and Steven Spielberg came together to make *BACK TO THE FUTURE*, expectations were high. Zemeckis had just come off of the massive hit *ROMANCING THE STONE*, and Spielberg had just produced *THE GOONIES* and *GREMLINS*. Although things started off a bit bumpy when lead actor Eric Stoltz was replaced with Michael J. Fox—considered a gamble due to his “TV sitcom” status—the time travel epic spawned two sequels and has become an institution whose popularity with new generations shows no signs of fading.



Legend (1985)

1990s



Darkman (1990)



Army of Darkness (1992)



Jurassic Park (1993)



The Mummy (1999)

While most reboots and re-imaginings tend to not go so well, the Stephen Sommers-directed version of the Boris Karloff classic caught fire with audiences. Eschewing the more cliché horror trappings of other monster remakes, Sommers opted for a serial/Indiana Jones adventure feel for the film. Knowing that he couldn't possibly challenge Karloff's performance, he opted to make the Mummy more of an evil deity whose presence was felt through ILM's digital trickery as opposed to sheer thespian aptitude. It made for a roller coaster ride that appealed to all ages and pulled in almost half a billion dollars at the box office.





2000s

How The Grinch Stole Christmas (2000)



Battlestar Galactica (2004)



Shaun of the Dead (2004)



Serenity (2005)

Before AVENGERS, Joss Whedon was mostly known for his TV work. BUFFY and its spin-off ANGEL were largely successful, running for a combined 12 seasons. But Whedon's next venture, the sci-fi/adventure series FIREFLY, didn't even finish out the first season. The tragedy was that the show was actually an excellent series, but was hampered by a poor timeslot, poorer marketing, and an apathetic network. But the fans would not be denied, raising money and ceaselessly petitioning for a film. The diligence paid off and fans were rewarded with SERENITY, an instant classic that was a poetic ending to a series that only continues to grow in popularity over time.



Drag Me to Hell (2009)



Scott Pilgrim
vs the World (2010)



Wolfman (2010)



In 2010, makeup wizards Rick Baker and Dave Elsey joined forces to bring their vision of one of horror's most iconic figures to life. While the film may not have been the gothic masterpiece that fans had hoped for, the creatures created by these two masters were some of the most terrifying and original werewolves the world had ever seen (and the Academy agreed).

A MOVIE MONSTER WHO SPOKE OUT AGAINST THE NAZI MONSTER

by Rafael Medoff and J. David Spurlock

No matter how many vampire movies, television shows, or books come along, Bela Lugosi will always be remembered by the American public for his role as Dracula, the quintessential prince of darkness. But new historical research indicates that this most famous of movie monsters also played a role in speaking out against the real-life monsters of Nazi Germany.

Lugosi (1882-1956) traveled a long and rocky road before he landed the role that would define his career. Because of his union activism, Lugosi was compelled to flee his native Hungary in 1919. The budding young actor hoped to settle in the United States, but new immigration restrictions made it extremely difficult for East Europeans to receive entry visas. He sneaked into the U.S. at the port of New Orleans in 1920, then later made his way to New York City and there managed to enter legally through Ellis Island.

Although he barely spoke English, Lugosi managed to land the starring role in John Balderston's stage adaption of the Bram Stoker novel, DRACULA. It debuted in New Haven in 1927, then enjoyed a 33-week run on Broadway.

With his authentic "Transylvanian" accent and hypnotic stare, Lugosi was the obvious choice to star in Hollywood's Dracula film four years later. The movie was a sensation, and Lugosi's bone-chilling performance mesmerized audiences from coast to coast. Starring roles in other horror films soon followed. By the time World War II broke out, he had established himself as Hollywood's most famous villain, as well as arguably the best-known Hungarian immigrant in America.

Meanwhile, real-life monsters were on the march. The Nazi war machine was roaring eastward, and Hungary's neighbors were crumbling one by one. Austria was taken without a shot. Yugoslavia and Croatia fell in 1941. Romania was next. Lugosi and other Hungarian-born Americans waited anxiously to see what would become of their beloved homeland.

American Jews, too, anxiously monitored news about Hungary. Millions of Jews elsewhere in Europe—Poland, France, western Russia—had been massacred in their villages or shipped off to death



camps. But Hitler had, for tactical reasons, left Hungary alone for the time being. That changed in March 1944. German troops occupied the country without a fight and installed a pro-Nazi government. The regime quickly agreed to collaborate with the newly-arrived Gestapo official Adolf Eichmann in deporting Hungary's 700,000 Jews to Auschwitz.

Earlier stages of the Holocaust had been partly shrouded in a veil of secrecy that the Nazis labored to maintain. But by 1944, the news was out. The Nazis began carrying out the mass deportation of Hungarian Jews in full view of the international community. Just three days after the deportations began, the New York Times reported that trainloads of Jews were being taken from Hungary's Carpathian provinces to "murder camps in Poland."

American Jewish organizations wanted the U.S. to intervene. The Roosevelt administration, however, viewed the Jewish refugee problem as an unnecessary distraction from the war effort. To bring pressure on the administration to take action, refugee advocates needed to do two things: they needed to draw public attention to the issue, and they needed to show that not just Jews, but also prominent non-Jews cared about the plight of Hungary.

And that's where Bela Lugosi came in.

Nowadays, we are well accustomed to Hollywood stars getting involved in world affairs, but the phenomenon was not at

all common in the 1940s. New research has revealed, however, that Lugosi was not afraid to take a stand for a just cause, and to use his celebrity status to boost that cause. Lugosi agreed to serve as one of the keynote speakers at a mass rally in Los Angeles on August 28, 1944, to demand the rescue of Hungary's Jews. The rally, which according to press reports attracted more than 2,000 participants, called on FDR to put pressure on the Hungarian regime, and to loosen America's immigration restrictions (the same regulations that had made it so hard for Lugosi himself to reach the United States).

The rally was part of a broader protest campaign that refugee advocates mounted nationwide during the spring and summer of 1944 to bring about U.S. intervention in Hungary. Unfortunately, those efforts met with only mixed results. President Roosevelt did agree to take in one group of about 1,000 Jewish refugees—but then declined to grant haven to others. He did eventually press the Hungarian leaders to stop the deportations, but that pressure came too late to save most of Hungary's Jews.

After the war, Lugosi again donated his time and talent to help the downtrodden. He volunteered to co-star in "That We May Live," a combination pageant and political rally urging the British to open Palestine to Holocaust survivors. The New York Times described it as an "indictment" of England's refusal to permit Jewish immigration to the Holy Land. "That We May Live" played to packed houses at Madison Square Garden in March 1946 and L.A.'s Shrine Auditorium in December of that year.

At a time when most people in the Free World chose to remain silent, Bela Lugosi spoke out. He may have portrayed savage villains on the silver screen, but in real life, Lugosi was a compassionate hero, raising his voice in protest against the savage persecution of the Jews in his native country.

Dr. Medoff is director of The David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies. Mr. Spurlock is founder of Vanguard Productions and co-author of THE FAMOUS MONSTER MOVE ART OF BASIL GOGOS.



MEZCO

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From their collection of Living Dead Dolls to their original takes on some of Hollywood's most iconic characters, Mezco Toyz is one of the premiere toy and collectible companies in the world. This fall, they begin what is sure to become one of THE premiere series for horror fans and collectors: Mezco's Universal Monsters. Combining their distinctive stylings and their love of monsters, Mezco will be putting their spin on some of cinema's most beloved icons. First up to the plate is Frankenstein's Monster. In preparation for this epic launch, Mezco has put together a fantastic photo shoot starring the newest addition to their collectible family.







"Toy photography is a hobby that came to me pretty naturally over time. I have been seriously collecting toys since 1986. I started out with vintage toys from the 70s, with my main focus on the 8" figures that were made by the toy company Mego. Superheroes, Planet of the Apes, Star Trek, and other vintage toys soon followed (including monster toys—I have always been a monster kid!). In the early 90s I started to collect some modern toys as well. I have always been a fan of photography, but never considered myself a photographer.

"I didn't start shooting toys until about 2000 or so, and in the early days all I did was take bad snapshots (with bad cameras) just to share with fellow collectors online. It grew from there. I started trying to put them in realistic poses and get artsy shots, but I didn't know anything about the rules of photography. It was all trial and error. A heck of a lot of terrible lighting going on back then. Also, you have to remember that digital cameras weren't all that great then, either. The first camera I used to shoot toys was a measly 4 MP point-and-shoot. A few years later I upgraded to a Sony Cyber-shot F717, which was 5 MP, but it had a really nice lens and was a pretty decent point-and-shoot camera at the time. It was with this camera that I honed my skills and style. Through a lot more trial and error and various online tutorials, I started to learn how to properly take a nice photo (settings, lighting, focus, etc). By this time I was full-blown mad about photography, and it was time to move up to a DSLR, which brought my shots to an all new level."

"Flash forward a bit: in 2008, my shots caught the attention of Mezco Toyz. They had me shoot their Gomez action figure, an amazing opportunity, which lead to shooting their 9" figures from the film THE WARRIOR. That shoot still remains my favorite shoot I have ever done. I really went all out on those. Built props, matched scenes frame for frame from the film, and tried to match the lighting of the scenes. Recreating scenes from film, or at least trying to get the feel of a film, is my favorite thing to do. Anyway, as I continued to shoot for Mezco, I had other shots published, as well as used on products. I should note, I don't only shoot toys, but they will always be my main focus. Simply put, the hobby led to another hobby that led to a job that I still do as a hobby. Collect and shoot them all!"

—Jason Jerde, photographer

"Universal's Frankenstein is legendary. I mean come on, it's Universal's Frankenstein! What's better than that?"

—Michael "Mez" Markowitz, President of Mezco Toyz

"These will be, without a doubt, some of the finest Universal Monster toys to ever be released. I've been a fan for more than four decades and I can say without hesitation these are the figures collectors have been waiting for! We're all Universal fans at Mezco and our genuine love and reverence for these characters will be more than evident in the final products. Here at Mezco, we understand that Horror is Universal."

—Mike Drake, Director of Special Projects at Mezco Toyz

MONSTER MASTER CLASS

WITH DAVE ELSEY



BARON FRANKENSTEIN:

I'VE HARMED NOBODY, JUST ROBBED A FEW GRAVES!

For your creation you will need...

1. Pros-Aide glue.
2. Cabosil (Fumed Silica) or thickened Pros-Aide (Cabopatch or Bondo).
3. Paper cups with lids.
4. Tongue depressors, or just plastic spoons.
5. Latex.
6. Artists' paint brushes.
7. Translucent powder, or just talcum powder.
8. A cheap, short black wig (or you can use your own hair if you sport the Justin Bieber look).
9. Tooth enamel.
10. Contact lenses (optional). I use a cool blind one from Lensway.co.uk.
11. Cotton buds.
12. Proclean (for removal).
13. Rubber mask grease paint.
14. Scissors.
15. A fine tooth comb.
16. Kitchen towel.
17. A silver bootlace, or a black one will do.
18. Mortician's wax.

FRANKENSTEIN! Just the name conjures up images of body snatching, laboratories, and mad scientists. The creature that Frankenstein creates is seemingly burned into our consciousness: the neck bolts, the square head, the big boots. All of this mostly comes from James Whale's movie, beautifully and sensitively played by Boris Karloff. It actually bears very little resemblance to the creature that Mary Shelley describes, but Jack Pierce's makeup is always foremost in our minds.

There have been many other adaptations since, but there are very few makeups that worked as well as Karloff's, and had the same shock value as the Universal Films creation.

But in 1957 a little British company called Hammer Films decided to start making gothic horror movies, beginning with a film called **THE CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN**.

It was to be different from the Universal movie in several ways, as Universal would not let them use some aspects of their version. Hammer decided to focus on the Baron rather than the creature, and the movie would be in rich, glorious color, allowing blood to be fully utilized for shock value.

Also different by necessity would be the creature's makeup. Universal would not allow Hammer to use the classic flat top design sported by Karloff.

Hammer hired Peter Cushing to play the Baron, assured that he was a solid and well-known actor, and lucked out when they cast the creature by hiring an unknown actor mostly for his height. They hired (6'5") actor Christopher Lee.

Makeup was not Hammer's strong suit. They had little money or time to put into the process, and the pre-production time spent working out how to create Lee's makeup caused makeup man Phil Leakey some real headaches. The makeup was a build up of wax and latex rubber pieces mostly held together with prayers. A blind contact lens added a nice lopsided touch, and the whole thing was topped off with a black Justin Bieber wig. It was truly a Frankenstein-ian makeup job, made up, as it was, of spare parts.

Strangely, and due in no small part to Leakey's ingenuity and Lee's performance, which was in turns pitiful and terrifying... the creature Lived!

Lee looks horrific—you can really believe that his head was made up of putrefying bits and pieces culled from hanged highwaymen that had been hung a little too long. I believe it is a classic makeup in its own right, and should be reassessed as one of the great Frankenstein designs!

I've always fancied myself as Baron Frankenstein, so on a foggy February day I gathered all of the equipment I needed and headed over to my friend Stephen Lane's "Propstore Of London" to make a monster out of spare parts! This is my diary of how you can do it, too. "Fritz! Throw the switches..."

STEPHEN LANE
MENTALLY
PREPARES FOR HIS
TRANSFORMATION
INTO A LEGEND!



FUNDAMENTALS



STEP 1: The first step is to tear up some paper towel and tack it down around the jawline and neck.



STEP 2: Stipple latex over the paper towel to blend it together, then stick it down to the neck. A couple of layers should do it. Dry with a hairdryer and powder before you move onto the next step.



STEP 3: Take some cotton wool and apply it in the same way as the paper towel to the chin, over the edges of the paper. Stipple with latex to blend into the face, then dry with a hairdryer, and powder again.

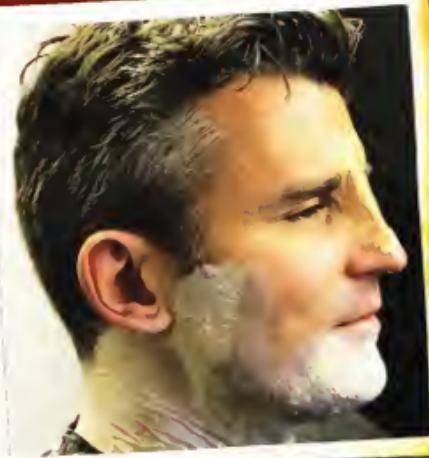
PROMINENT BROW



STEP 4: Latex is stippled on to blend. It's then dried and powdered, ready for the next stage...



STEP 5: Using mortician's wax, add a broader nose that blends the bridge of the nose onto the forehead, giving the face an odd, blunt profile—a characteristic of Christopher Lee's makeup.



STEP 6: In profile, it should look like this.



STEP 7: Add a strip of thickened Pros-Aide across the forehead. This will be smoothed with a little water and will become Frankenstein's operation scars! Once you have it smoothed, create a deep scar using a blunt sculpting tool or a wooden tongue depressor.

SURGICAL SCARS



STEP 8: The forehead is the most dramatic here, as that's where the Baron likes to stitch his damaged brains.



STEP 9: Add the cheek scars, followed by the ones around the jaw and neck.



STEP 10: Keep adding a lot of random lumps and bumps. I've studied the makeup in the movie, and it's impossible to make out all the details, but there are a few that appear in all the movie stills, such as this weird cheek swirl. I offer no explanation as to what these lumps and bumps represent, but the makeup feels wrong without them, and they add to the general pulpy, rotten look of the face.



STEP 11: Continue to refine the nose, adding texture with a stipple sponge.



STEP 12: Dry everything with a hairdryer.



STEP 13: Next, using a little spirit gum, stick silver shoe laces in small pieces over the scar. These look just like metal stitches!



STEP 14: Blend them top to bottom with more thickened Pros-aide.



STEP 15: Now we paint! Use rubber mask grease paint for this. First, add the base coat: a grey flesh tone (mixed by getting the lightest flesh tone in the kit and adding a little black to it).

FINAL TOUCHES

STEP 16: Add lots of overlapping shades of grays and reds. They shape the face and give depth to the rotting flesh. Don't overdo it, as there is already a lot of surface detail for the lights to pick up. I also added highlights to the scars to pick them out, because the scars on the original makeup had very obvious edges, especially on the cheeks.



STEP 17: Finally, add the wig and the final details, such as contact lenses.

IT'S ALIVE!



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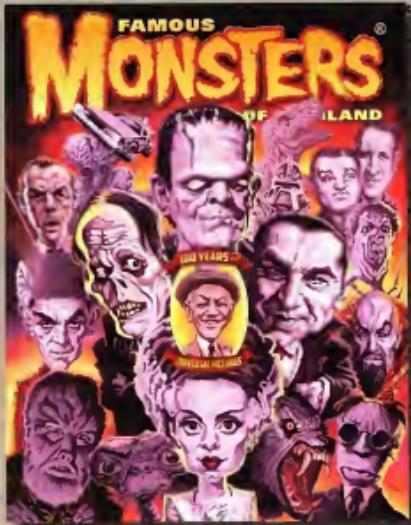
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*Carla Laemmle:
The Princess in the Magic City*

No coverage of Universal's "Century of Scream" would be complete without mention of our dear friend, Carla Laemmle. Niece to Universal's founder, Carl Laemmle, Carla is now 102 years old (going on 21!). Having studied classical dance growing up in Chicago, Carla and her family moved to Universal City where she found herself in the role of Prima Ballerina in Lon Chaney's PHANTOM OF THE OPERA.

And if that wasn't enough to cement her horror credibility, Carla was the first person to ever utter a line in a Universal horror film at the dawn of the sound era. In the opening sequence in Bela Lugosi's DRACULA, it was Carla bouncing around in that carriage who intoned the now famous line, "Among the rugged peaks that crown down upon the Borgo Pass, are found crumbling castles of a bygone age."

Carla has been an ambassador for Universal horror all her life, a link to a time and place that are no more than pictures on screens or words on a page to most of us. Her memories of Hollywood's golden age and the actors of yesterday are as priceless as anything found in the Louvre or the Smithsonian. Carla Laemmle is truly one of our greatest living national treasures.



FAIRY TALE LAST WORDS

"They don't know how to make good horror films in Hollywood anymore... Boy, they really need me!"
-Lon Chaney, Jr.



NEXT ISSUE:

Time to take a trip down memory lane... Oh, sorry, that should read "Mockingbird Lane". This October, FM revisits the First Family of Horror: The Munsters. Issue 264 will be loaded with never-before-seen images from behind the scenes with all your favorite Munster actors, along with never released articles and interviews covering the series, the cars, the collectibles, all the different Marilyns, and all the other MUNSTER fun factoids we can cram into the issue!

Plus, we'll delve into the blurry line between Hollywood horror and real life, the Academy restoration of the cult classic SPIDERBABY, a look back at I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF, and so much more!

FAMOUS MONSTERS WHAT IF?

A LOOK AT PROJECTS THAT COULD HAVE BEEN
BUT MAY NEVER BE..

by Nick Ekum

Universal Studios had several monster mash up films: HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN, HOUSE OF DRACULA, ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN, and FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN, amongst them. There was almost another monster brawl when the two titans of terror, the Wolf Man and Dracula, were to battle it out in their own film... in Technicolor!

According to WOLF MAN VS DRACULA – AN ALTERNATE HISTORY FOR CLASSIC FILM MONSTERS by Philip J. Riley, following PHANTOM OF THE OPERA (1943), in the middle of the Silver Age of Universal Studio's monster movies, a new sequel to FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN was considered for a Technicolor production: WOLFMAN VS DRACULA, starring Lon Chaney Jr., who was the only actor to portray all four of Universal's classic monster roles: Dracula, Frankenstein's Monster, the Mummy, and the Wolf Man. At first Chaney was to play both roles, as his father Lon Chaney Sr. had done in several of his famous silent films. But Larry Talbot in his human phase would look too much like Count Dracula, so the role of Dracula was given to its originator, Bela Lugosi.

A script was prepared by Bernard Shubert, who had written the screenplay for Tod Browning's LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT remake, MARK OF THE VAMPIRE (1935). Shubert kept the settings very tight to keep the costs down in order to balance out the extra expense of Technicolor. But by 1944 Bela Lugosi was in his 60s and would have had to play part of his role as a giant bat, much like in Coppola's BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA in the 90s—which would have been too much for him. And they couldn't have the Wolf Man fighting an animated bat like John Carradine's depiction of the Count, or even Lugosi's portrayal in ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN. So they decided to make one of their Arabian Nights film on the Technicolor contract, and all that remains of WOLFMAN VS DRACULA are some color 8x10s of Chaney in both parts. The 121-page script was eventually discovered in a vault at Universal Studios.

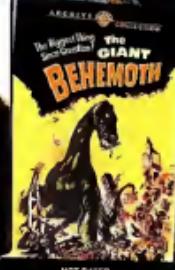


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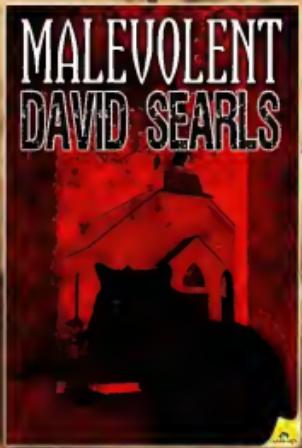
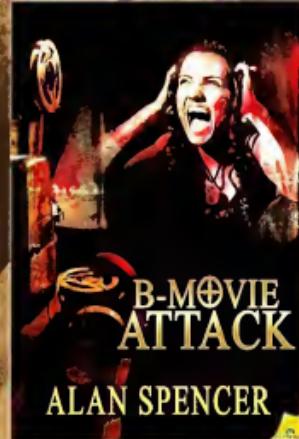
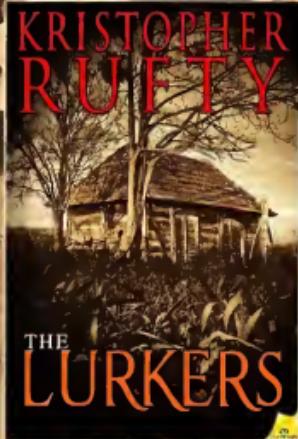
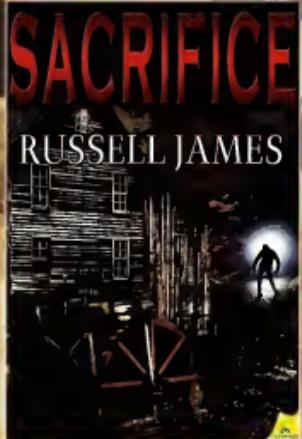


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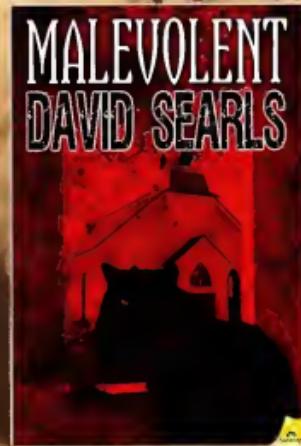
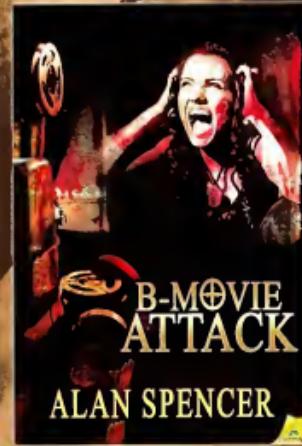
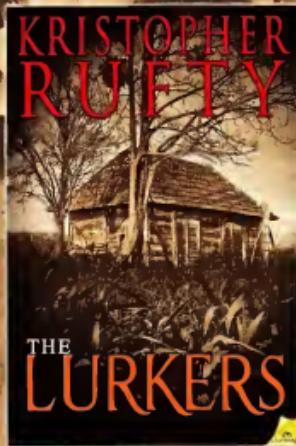
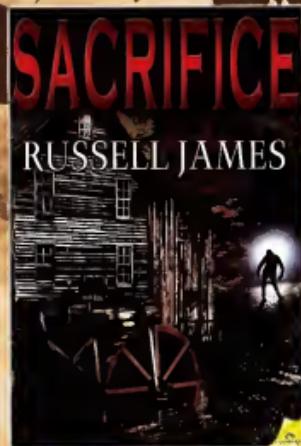


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